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Genesis
Volume II
A continuation of the record of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

REMAINING EVENTS OF YEAR 2002

With this continuation of the record of the Genesis of the Church, the reader is presumed to have already read Genesis I which covers the period from May 1999 to March 2002. We are pleased to offer a more narrative format in this Genesis II, which was first issued sequentially in *The Hastening Times*, and is now here combined into this booklet, similar to the Genesis of the Church which was assembled and published in 2003. The Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has faithfully accepted the call to historically document the renewal of the faith once delivered long ago through the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. We believe that this is the last great dispensation of time. We received our commission from the Lord and seek daily to walk in submission to His Holy Will, and to assist in bringing to pass the establishment of His Kingdom here on earth.

The beginning of any new year is usually something of a milestone for most cultures and nations. As 2007 moves forward, our concerns, with people of good will from every walk of life, are for a world beset with calamity in many places. Human suffering and tragedy continue to headline the news on a daily basis. The cries of the hungry, the poor and the afflicted are heard the world over, even as, in other places and circumstances, there is overabundance and reckless waste, made all the worse by knowing ***"...the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare;"*** said the Lord of His provision for all mankind. (D&C 101:2f) The prophetic warning of the Apostle James, addressing the vision he had of our day, comes with clarity: ***"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days...Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter."*** (James 5:1-3,5)

One might well ask amidst the suffering and sorrow of so many of the world's inhabitants, where is the light and the glory? Who will lead the charge of our longing for the triumph of peace and righteousness to that hoped-for new day? Pope John Paul II, recently departed, and surely a good man, became old and in ill health. The church which he led, with some 280 million adherents worldwide (approximately 61 million in the U.S.) is facing mounting scandals with regard to sexual abuse among and by its priesthood. Referring to the Columbia Encyclopedia, multiple disclosures in the U.S. in 2002 revealed that some bishops ignored the problem and allowed accused priests to continue performing the sacraments. More recently, lawsuits have awarded hundreds of millions of dollars to plaintiffs, and as a consequence, some dioceses face bankruptcy. Further, especially in the U.S., there is a growing opposition by the more liberal elements of Catholicism to the Pope's stand on refusing to allow the ordination of women priests. Many ask, *"Do we look to that centuries-old institution, the Roman Catholic Church for the Kingdom Christ proclaimed?"* Remnant Saints do not think so!

Today many mainline Protestant denominations have similarly forsaken standards of moral and ethical relationships as set forth by the Master, and recorded by and framed in the New Testament. These have long

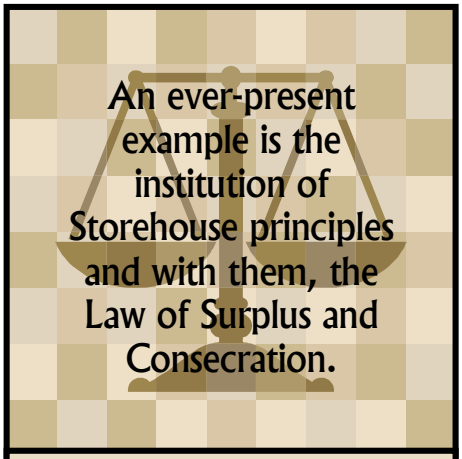
Events within the churches and abroad in the world starkly remind us that God's purpose in creating human life is to prepare each person to meet and be acceptable to live eternally in His presence, with both God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Satan, on the other hand, seeks to destroy such a possibility!

been accepted as basic tenets of the "Christian" faith. In the secular arena, even the warnings of early patriots and statesmen in our own land are being cast aside with impunity as the majority of our society rushes into the perilous times the Apostle Paul declared would come in the latter days. One can only ask, are those days already here, or should we continue to wait for even further evidence? Who will lift the warning voice? Who will sound the trumpet in Zion?

All the foregoing, and much more, is rising to the surface in nearly every level of human relations in today's society. Whether it be ethics within corporate business or labor, relationships within the home and family, developments in government, education, and arts and entertainment, or whatever element of human relationship one might identify—even while gratefully acknowledging the surviving good to be found everywhere—the seeds of decay are being sown and we see the result of their fruit. A high percentage of national and local newscasts are regularly dedicated to human tragedy, the violation of law and order, the abuse of drugs and alcohol, and the general abandonment of what was once called good judgment. We should be greatly alarmed at the senseless acts of crimes against children and the old and helpless. Paul's litany of conditions by which so many will be held hostage are far too evident...covetousness, pride, blasphemy, disobedience [both civil and to parents], unthankfulness, unholiness, being without natural affections [a plague upon previous civilizations and an emerging scourge within our present society], being traitors, fierce despisers of those who are good [an increasing trend], and on and on.

Where do alarmed parents turn whose children's tender minds are bombarded by the filth of degenerate profiteers of our age? How do people loving law and order cope with these violations of home and property by a senseless, unrestrained criminal element that rampages without provocation through city and suburb? Was it perhaps on such a scene that the writer of Ecclesiastes lingered and in despair exclaimed, ***"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity"?*** Are we made, as we believe, in the image of God and yet destined to witness the wrong increase, and will righteousness ultimately be forced to succumb to such wickedness and tyranny? Will not the earth yet rest, which was the lament of Enoch, and fulfill the purpose of her creation–the Kingdom of the Everlasting God, in which shall dwell the redeemed from every dispensation? It is here that we need to go back to the Preacher (in Ecclesiastes) who, in his observation of the human condition declared, ***"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."*** (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14)

Turning to the present anxiety and turmoil currently in focus among "Restorationists," it is distressing to observe the evident confusion among varying elements and groups claiming allegiance to restored gospel heritage. Having experienced the renewing Spirit that led to retrieving the forsaken faith, Remnant Saints can but wonder at the seeming unwillingness by many to "come and see" how the fires of the old-time gospel story are burning brightly once again. The Remnant Church now stands complete, its officers in place with a President/Prophet of the lineage of Joseph at its head. Fundamental gospel tenets are being proclaimed. Movements toward implementation of Celestial Law—principles long taught and believed—are going forward. Original articles and covenants are reaffirmed, and more importantly, are again being implemented. An ever-present example is the institution of Storehouse principles and with them, the Law of Surplus and Consecration.



Saints and their friends should note that this is not an introduction of "new doctrine." It is merely the recalling to modern focus of instructions given to us earlier, but never before acknowledged by unified responsive implementation.

While we applaud every effort for unity, those now solidly entrenched in the Remnant cause can but wonder what it is that the several sponsoring groups, all essentially independent, are expecting the Lord to reveal to them...a different gospel? A different church? Perhaps one of the saddest circumstances surrounding the independent branches and factions, and among the most deceived, are those who cling to the notion that the Reorganized Church (now called the Community of Christ) somehow still exists and will, in some future miraculous way, be revived. According to that view, this former church will renounce its disjunctive practices and be given a new, and in their view, authoritative prophet/president, around which all the

presumed faithful will then rally. The fallacy of such a misguided notion ignores the facts of both revelation and history. The Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints stands on the indisputable position that the authoritative Church exists only where the law is kept and the authority of the priesthood abides. Calling one's self orthodox and avoiding the weightier matter of the law is, as the Apostle Peter would say, ***"These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest..."*** (II Peter 2:17) Shall we look to such critics who have no president of the high priesthood through whom comes the authority of ***"...the administering of ordinances and blessings upon the Church"?*** (D&C 104:31f) Apart from all the confusion and separation among so-called Restorationists, what hope is offered by those who once shared the witness of the restored gospel, but who are now, over a period of several years, following the paths of changing Protestantism and willingly abandoning the [divinely given] commandments directly related to the hope of Zion?

As Abraham Lincoln, the great Emancipator, said, "With malice toward none and charity for all," Latter Day Saints of the Remnant Church proclaim the fullness of the gospel and extend to the scattered and disorganized everywhere an invitation to join with us in the great and last call to free Zion from her bondage. As our quarterly publication's masthead proclaims, these are indeed *The Hastening Times*! The night will surely come when, for many, opportunity to assist in His work will have passed, as the Lord of the vineyard warned through President Israel A. Smith, as long ago as 1950. (D&C 142:5)

In the spirit of, and with the same appeal that the Lord extended through Brother Joseph III during the formative years of reorganization, our hand of fellowship is extended to all the sincere of heart and those with righteous intent. Night and darkness are spreading ominous clouds across the horizons of the far-too-long-maintained indecision. In the Spirit and in the name of the altogether Holy One, come; come and let us walk in the old paths, unified and bound together by one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. Then comes the promise—of the increase of His government of which there shall indeed be no end.

The events that unfolded at the Conference of 2002 revealed that it was time to take one more step; this divine directive was presented in the following revelation:

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS R-145

Following the passing of President Israel A. Smith in 1958, a pattern of reinterpreting the commandments and covenants began to unfold in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Among the more obvious would be the ordination of women, introduction of open communion, and a diminution of Zion and the Gathering. Eventually, these changes culminated in the name, given by revelation, being changed to "Community of Christ." Throughout the years, beginning in 1984, scores of branches and thousands of former members left the old fellowship. During this period many attempts were made by well meaning individuals and groups, all without success, in bringing about a true return to the original faith. The emergence of what would become known as the "Remnant" began to unfold by 1998, and in due course, to this faithful body, came the posterity of Joseph Smith Jr.

From the "Proclamation and Invitation to the Faithful" (May 18, 1999) to the Interim Council of High Priests (July 17, 1999) to the calling of the seven Apostles forming the Quorum of Twelve (September 23, 2000), the work of renewing and restoring the Church went forward under the direction of the Holy Spirit and in harmony with the pattern of Reorganization in 1853 1860. The coming forth of a President of the High Priesthood, to again restore the organic structure of the Church, had been on the hearts and in the prayers of the Saints for many years. Finally in April 2002 one of lineal descent from Joseph Smith, Jr., founder and prophet of the original 1830 Church of Jesus Christ, came forward in response to a divine call to that office. The revelation which follows was presented to the Quorums, Orders and membership at the General Conference April 6, 2002 where it was unanimously received as the mind and will of God to his servant Frederick N. Larsen, and to the Church. By further action of the Conference it was ordered to be included in the Doctrine and Covenants.

To my servant Frederick Niels Larsen by the Voice of Inspiration and to the Church Assembled:

1a. *"**In answer to your inquiry regarding the needs of my Church the following is given: My servant, David W. Bowerman, who has labored tirelessly and diligently for so many years as a true and faithful servant of mine now needs the burden he has carried to be shared more fully by the one who has the lawful right of lineage to the prophetic office.***

1b. It is time to take one more step in the renewal of my Church. Requisites for your preparation have now been met and you are now called to take your place as President of the High Priesthood and President of my Church in these last days.

2. My Church has languished long without prophetic leadership and if you, my son, serve in humility and

faithfulness I will bless you as a Prophet, Seer and Revelator to my people in these last days.

3. Even though I have revealed unto you those chosen to be your counselors in the Quorum of the First Presidency, it is only given at this time that my servant David W. Bowerman's apostleship is to be extended in presidency. He is called from among the brethren of the Quorum of Twelve and is to be set apart as a counselor in the First Presidency as soon as practicable.

4. The Quorum of Twelve is now freed of their interim administrative responsibilities for the Church and should now move out in vigor to prosecute more fully the missionary work. In their reorganization, they are free to choose their own officers as dictated by prayer and wisdom. In mine own due time others will be called to fill the Quorum.

5. The principle of Stewardship in my Church is required of all and the calling and work of the Bishopric should be sought out in earnest. Only then can the gathering of my people be completed according to the Law.

6a. As given in previous revelation: 'It is yet day when all can work. The night will come when for many of my people opportunity to assist will have passed.'

b. This counsel is even more portentous now than then and the mantle of leadership will be yours to prepare my people before the night comes.

7a. The Spirit says further: 'Continue, my faithful Remnant, in the spirit of unity to strengthen your faith, to spread the love of Christ to a sin-sick world, to study to understand the fullness of my Gospel, and if you do, you will be blessed beyond measure.

b. The Kingdom of God awaits your response. Make ready for the bridegroom.' Amen."

Respectfully submitted,
Frederick N. Larsen
Independence, Missouri
April 4, 2002

FREDERICK NIELS LARSEN ORDAINED

During the evening service on a most significant date, April 6, Frederick Niels Larsen was ordained to the office of President of the High Priesthood, and the Church. A new day had dawned, the work was revived, and the prayers of the waiting faithful had been fulfilled.

The following Sunday morning, now-President Larsen presided over the Sacrament service, a thrilling experience for every person present, as members of the Standing High Council assisted and the Presiding Elders of the branches served the emblems. The time of refreshing had arrived, bringing a challenging sermon from the President of the Church, followed by a moving and eloquent prayer of consecration and blessing by Patriarch Alvin Pitt of Missouri Valley, Iowa.

As with all great experiences, there are beginnings and endings, and the Conference closed. The hallowed moments of its all-too-brief nature will long be reflected upon. The Church now faced a future that called for unusual and dedicated response of its membership.

EXCERPTS FROM CONFERENCE MESSAGE

In his closing Conference Sermon, President Larsen made several references about where he felt our agenda (in the Spring of 2002) fit into the rescued and reordered thrust of the Restoration Movement, which had originally been given voice and implementation by his great-great-grandfather. A few of these thoughts are given in the following excerpts from this message:

"I suspect you might be somewhat interested in the things I perceive that lie ahead of us...Let us never forget this, that it is indeed by His grace that He is our Savior, and we can in no way work our way into heaven, but remember that faith without works is dead. Having pledged ourselves to accept the grace of our Lord Jesus who sacrificed for us, let us follow with works...A second scripture I'm going to use...was given to me as a point of inspiration some time ago. That comes from Section 142 of the Doctrine and Covenants: (this was given by Brother Israel Smith in 1950, which was a long time ago for most of us.) At this point I must remind you that Bro. Israel was seventy years old in February when he was ordained Prophet of the Church that April, 1946. I was seventy years old in January of this year, and have now taken that same place. I would also remind you of one thing that caught my eye—Joseph Smith the Martyr was not ordained the President of the Church until about a year and a half after the Church was organized. We organized a little over a year and a half ago. Nonetheless this scripture is so keen for so many of us and has been our hope and our slogan for so long, when Bro. Israel brought that prophetic message: ***"The hopes of my people and the goals of my Church, while not yet fully realized, and at times and to many seemingly distant, are closer to realization than many recognize."*** (D&C 142:5a,b) *Now 52 years have gone by. The last portion of that message says,* ***"It is yet day***

when all can work. The night will come when for many of my people opportunity to assist will have passed." *Yes, my fellow Saints, it is yet "day."*

"One thing that we have is prophetic guidance, not just as it might come from this humble servant, but we've had it in the past years. The one thing that solidified my evidence of the divinity of the work that we're in, is that when those inspired messages were brought to the Conference of Restoration Elders in past years, (there were twelve of them, which are included in [the booklet] Genesis I) they were rejected by the body of those Elders. I think I know that for many of those men the opportunity to assist has passed...Yes, the opportunity has been missed by many—an opportunity to serve—because the time is past for them. The Remnant Church has now gathered men and women of faith, honor and integrity. Yes, it is yet "day." It seemed to me in my observations after that Conference, and as we began our Prayer and Study Group, that more and more families had gathered to the Center Place; yes, indeed,[it remains] *the land of promise containing the Mount of Zion. So I along with all of you look forward, dedicated to the concept that the Lord has designated this place as the Center Place, and the Center Place is for this gathering, and it will occur. Here we are today, a united people. It seems we are not many in number here but this gathering represents the majority of our Church. We are few in number compared to those around us–few in number, but it is not only quantity that the Lord Jesus is looking for, but also quality. It is my message to you that indeed out of this small group, His promises for the building of His Kingdom will come forth.*

"Where do we go from here?...There is obviously a great need for [a renewal of] the work of the Seventy. ...All of our ministry are self-sustaining right now. Oh, that we had the funds to support [these] men, who now must find a vocation to earn a living, as they would go out into the field to spread the Gospel. I believe that [future financial support for some missionaries] will happen; soon we will work diligently toward that. In the meantime the Lord will call men to the Seventy to fulfill that mission because it is so desperately needed. There will be an emphasis on the domestic field. I would read from Section 118 for your understanding. It was given to my great-grandfather, Joseph Smith III in 1882, twenty-two years after the Church was reorganized: ***"...In asking of me, ye did well. I will hasten my work in its time. Ye can not now prosecute missions in many foreign lands, nor is it expedient that the elders of the first quorums be sent out of the land of America until the work of the reorganization of my Church be more fully established, and a greater unity of understanding between them be obtained."***

"This is the direction that we will also follow. It is not expedient at the moment that we go to foreign lands. However, we will not turn down any interests [and inquiries] of those in foreign lands, who want to explore the Gospel of Jesus Christ and associate with the work of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints...The work of the Apostolic Quorum will be in fields to which they have been assigned, now that the work in the Center Place will be fully under the jurisdiction of the First Presidency—as it has been during much of the early work of the Church—working closely in this area to continue to strengthen and build up those programs that are essential for us...I inquired of the Lord about those in the Restoration groups, because of my concern as well as yours, for those in the independent groups. His answer to me was, ***I will melt their hearts.*** *Some of them obviously are so hardened that this won't likely happen, but for many it will, as the Lord sees and influences the intent of their hearts. He will soften and melt them, and they will join us. There is hope in that!"*

> *"Zion is the difference between the Gospel of Salvation as taught by the world, and the Gospel of the Kingdom that is taught by the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."*

"THE LIGHT IN WHICH YOU STAND"

The remainder of 2002 was spent in seeking to implement many of the things discussed at this historic meeting. Long will we reflect upon the hallowed moments of its all-too-brief duration. It had indeed been a year of preparation. Only now, the question about prophetic leadership had been answered with the calling forth and acceptance of Frederick N. Larsen to fulfill that position. The Church could now address a future that called for unusual and dedicated response by the determined Remnant Saints of Jesus Christ.

A few months later, Apostle Gary Argotsinger recounted many of the experiences that various Saints received as they prepared for and attended the various sessions of this historic Conference. He likened our recent Church situation, before the coming forth of Brother Larsen, to that experienced by Joseph Smith III, as young Joseph struggled to know what to do with the emerging problem of Utah polygamy. He was

being strongly urged to accept and to join the emerging and fast-growing Utah church. One day he was in the field sowing wheat on his farm, when suddenly he saw a big funnel cloud in the sky, the bottom part soon overtaking and enveloping him. Within it was a great white light which also enveloped him. A divine answer to this overwhelming problem of affiliation which he was grappling with was soon solved, as this Spirit suggested the action he would subsequently take by saying to him, "*...Because the light in which you stand is greater than theirs."* While such feelings in our day are just as reassuring as they were to Joseph Smith III, Remnant Saints must remember the accompanying admonition that "*to whom much is given, much will be required."*

During the remainder of 2002, this same Spirit led many Remnant Saints to remember this new obligation to perform at a level commensurate with the blessings we have been receiving. Center Branch Pastor John Pritchard, in a sermon reprinted in *The Hastening Times* entitled "We Must 'Feed' Our Lord First," pointed out the conditional nature of these divine blessings. Remnant Saints must now resist thinking that the Lord has not answered their prayers, if in fact they have not qualified fully for such blessings. A prompt and full response to His requirements and commandments can be expected to be forthcoming.

Apostle Steve Church reminded the Saints that our duty is to understand and teach the Gospel of the Kingdom, which is more comprehensive than the more-narrowly-focused Gospel of Salvation advocated by most of today's Christian denominations. This larger Kingdom concept was repeatedly taught by Jesus as He traveled with His disciples along the pathways of the Holy Land. Brother Church explained that Jesus described both the steps necessary for salvation and those further preparations needed for the end-time Kingdom of God on earth, a society of righteous and repentant people that He will return to and personally lead when its formation and their preparations are sufficiently in place. In his remarks, Brother Church said, *"Zion is the difference between the Gospel of Salvation as taught by the world, and the Gospel of the Kingdom that is taught by the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."*

At the Wilburton (OK) Reunion, President Larsen gave his special thoughts on "time" as it is measured to mankind, as well as the belief that we are now in the "last days." He also shared the thought that we are preparing our people for eternal life, that [goal] which God had earlier said through the latter-day Prophet—that His work and His glory is to make humans immortal and fully prepared for an eternal life with both God and His Son, by means of the righteous refinement of their present lives.

Three reunions were successfully held in 2002. They were assembled in Colorado (Cedaredge, near Delta), in Oklahoma (Wilburton) and in Missouri (St. Joseph). An excellent and uplifting Spirit attended each. In one of his messages late in the year, High Priest Gregory Turner reminded the Saints that we are commanded to seek a condition of "common consent" among Saints, but that such desirable unity is only a virtue when we are unified in the truth: *"Unity in error, or unity in [upholding] sin, is not a virtue."*

With the First Presidency in place, and the several Apostles venturing into various field opportunities, the pace of activities greatly increased. Elder Richard Trimble was called to be a Seventy, and Apostle P. James Buchman was chosen by his fellows to be President of their Quorum. Elder Kenneth Scafe was called to be the Assistant General Church Treasurer, to assist Treasurer T. J. Smith. An important meeting was held in Genesco, IL in May between four Remnant officials and leaders in the Church of Christ Restored [Michigan], as well as The Association for The Unity of Restoration Saints. A similar informational meeting between these brethren was held in Independence in August.

Total offerings for 2001 were announced as $406,333.62. There were 317 tithing filers as of September 30, 2002, and renewed emphasis on following the financial law was declared. Early in 2002, a rare purchase opportunity for a 26-acre site, later named The Gathering Place, was successfully concluded. It had been so named by a survey among area Saints. It was formerly owned by the 4-H organization in South Central Independence. Plans for repair and improvement of two large buildings, and further development of the extensive undeveloped portions of the site were underway throughout the remainder of the year. A program of sacrifice offerings was announced to make possible these future developments and to fully pay for the purchase price of $520,000. This program was wonderfully supported by the offerings of the Saints.

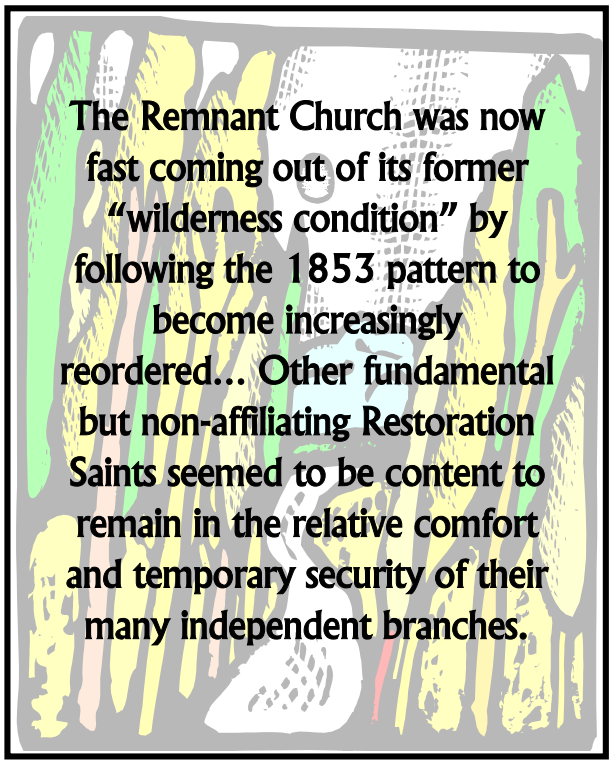
Fall activities included a Youth Rally at the Central Office Building on October 25-27, and a Retreat for men and boys at Blackgum, OK Campgrounds on November 9-10. The Marlin Texas Branch celebrated their 105th anniversary on October 19-20, and the Southern Indiana Branch held a Consecration Service on December 2, for their newly-purchased House of Worship in Floyds Knobs, IN. Year 2002 proved to be a breathtaking one of further renewal, and the Church members greatly rejoiced at what the Lord had made possible through their faith and trust in Him. ■

EVENTS OF YEAR 2003

UNITY – VALIDATING GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

As the year 2003 unfolded, it was for the Remnant Saints "both the best of times and the worst of times," as Charles Dickens had once observed in the opening paragraphs of his classic story based on the struggles in London and Paris during the time of the French Revolution. These struggles were depicted in his book *A Tale of Two Cities.* The Remnant Church was now fast coming out of its former "wilderness condition" by following the 1853 pattern to become increasingly reordered. As part of the best of times, the Church was once again being led by a president/prophet, Frederick N. Larsen, who was a lineal descendent of founder Joseph Smith, Jr.; this President was once again overseeing the work of a quorum of Apostles. The Church was also once again enjoying unity, but now to a new and unprecedented degree among its members—all those who had gratefully reunited from out of the scattered fragments from the divisive doctrinal apostasy of the Institutional Church.

Because it was an important lesson from their past, these Remnant members were now fully aware that this unity not only represented the validating gift of the Holy Spirit, but it also resulted from actions of a stable leadership, one which was presenting to the body only those policies of divinely-evident integrity. These were proposals which were stripped of any personal agendas of ambitious men or women. Thankfully, the affiliated members being gathered were demonstrating that they were now spiritually informed and attuned, eager to share their many talents, and strongly motivated to matters of divine priority. Their unified actions were rapidly moving the Church toward the implementation of those previously established Church doctrines and Zionic procedures. But it was also the worst of times, as the unfortunate problem clouding the Remnant horizon was that the number of reawakened Saints, the ones who had so far responded to the reordering of the Church, was considerably fewer than had been hoped. But as the new Prophet would again be led to emphasize in 2003, it was yet "day" when opportunity to join and to assist in the work was still possible!


The Remnant Church was now fast coming out of its former "wilderness condition" by following the 1853 pattern to become increasingly reordered… Other fundamental but non-affiliating Restoration Saints seemed to be content to remain in the relative comfort and temporary security of their many independent branches.

MANY CONTENT TO REMAIN "INDEPENDENT"

Other fundamental but non-affiliating Restoration Saints seemed to be content to remain in the relative comfort and temporary security of their many independent branches. They continued to express vague allegiances to what they variously claimed was the "elusive nature" of moving ahead, of striving to once again attain a proper "church organization" with a divinely-mandated leader-ship structure. Consequently, they were quick to claim that they still held out hope of identifying such a satisfactory leader, one who would participate with them in some undefinable umbrella organization, and who, after he made his appearance, could begin again this future pursuit of a Zion-building process. Yet, these independent Saints seemed unable to see sufficient merit in what the Remnant Church had just accomplished to persuade themselves to join. This remained true for many Saints even after Remnant members pointed out that their own recent actions had been faithful to the successful reorganizing pattern of the 1850s, a pattern which had resulted in the emergence of the Reorganized Church and a century of responsible growth before it began to deviate.

A completely different set of obstacles seemed to engulf the remaining members of what had formerly been the Reorganized Church, now since 2000 calling themselves the Community of Christ. Their redirected organization, now considerably reduced in active membership, was already serving with its second successive leadership by a non-lineal president. Their new direction now appeared to be more concerned with addressing social issues in today's modern society, or in fitting in with

the existing programs of mainstream Protestant churches of the community. Many of their members appeared to be little troubled by the recent adoption of these latest program mutations—of their increasing deviation from many of the previous church programs and doctrinal relationships that had been divinely given to a series of Restoration Prophets over a period of 150 years. Nor did the Community of Christ any longer express a desire to participate in any future re-creation of any modern city/society for righteous perfection, like the Zionic city which had been organized and built in Enoch's time.

ZIONIC CHALLENGE

This Zionic environment of the past was the one which our Lord had commanded the latter-day Restoration Prophets of pioneer America to rebuild—a replica of the righteous city in which the Lord, in approval, had anciently walked its streets. In fact, the accomplishments of Enoch's Zion were still prominently described and lauded in two of three books of still-recognized R.L.D.S. scriptures—in both the Inspired Version of the Bible and Doctrine and Covenants. The Community of Christ seemed to be rushing onward in its preference for New Age values and social interpretations.

Thus, Remnant Saints with our restored organizational structure based on the original Restoration pattern were in effect largely proceeding alone to accomplish this Zionic challenge: to again describe and then further implement our own recent uplifting experience. At least for the present, ours alone was the task of beginning again the revival of our heritage Church. The immediate need was to recruit modern-day laborers for the vigorous pursuit of this original Zionic enterprise. Certainly, no one alive today could deny that these portentous times cried out for some kind of divine answer to mankind's growing polarizations!

GATHERING PLACE DEVELOPED

As the year 2003 opened, work was underway to renovate and improve both existing buildings that we had inherited with the purchase of the Gathering Place. The January issue of *News Briefs* contained architects' conceptual drawings of what was being planned, both for future site development (at least as far as it was known at that early time), and what was already underway in both building renovations. The Worship Center Building was to be a place for large joint-worship services as well as a congregational home for First Branch, which had been meeting in the Sanctuary at the Church Office Building.

Necessary work was being expedited by selected member-contractors, under the supervision of High Priest Joe Ben Stone. Their skilled workers were being augmented by many capable volunteers from the Church membership. By Conference time, both buildings were made sufficiently ready to permit holding all sessions on the premises, thus freeing the Church from its previous need to rent the required meeting space from public facilities.

As the size and future functionality of these former 4-H buildings became increasingly evident, the Saints were justifiably filled with a very special kind of gratitude. When the Saints had originally departed from the Institutional Church, and a few years later assembled themselves together from the various Restoration Branches, they sought to reorganize under the Lord's directing Spirit in the pattern of the past. In all but one case, they had to leave any equity in their former places of worship. They had to abandon all these previous investments and start over—investments which had been made over the years in many different facilities prior to this exodus.

Conference Center Building Gets a Facelift.

CENTER PLACE OF ZION DESIGNATED

It was with this background in mind that the First Presidency wrote in its Editorial Comment for the winter issue (No. 14) of *The Hastening Times*: "For all the Saints who have caught the vision of renewal and patiently endured the troubled days of longing and waiting following [the events of] the mid-eighties, it has been an inspiring time of refreshing as the Remnant has emerged, just as the Reorganization did [in the 1853-1860 period], to carry on the sacred trust of the Gospel restored [to earth]. That journey has been made even more exciting as we have witnessed the revival of hope, and expectancy for continued prophetic guidance toward Kingdom-centered goals."

A more detailed communication from the First Presidency was also contained in this January 2003 issue of the *News Briefs.* The following brief excerpt from it was of special interest to all the Saints:

"With the former highlights as a reminder of the need for all to prepare sacrificially for the ever present call to 'higher ground,' we now wish to communicate further steps toward implementation of '...the cause of Zion.' In order to prepare the central area for the city of Zion, Jackson County and the immediate surrounding areas, as required, is hereby being formally designated as the Center Place. This will purposely set in motion the re-application of long-standing revelatory directives to prepare for the gathering. Consequently, the Center Place of Zion will be administered under the direction of the First Presidency through local high priests, and elders acting as their assistants in presiding over and building up the work in the central area. Saints in the Center Place will participate within 'congregations' rather than as separate, and more independent branches, carrying forward a coordinated program of ministry toward common goals and objectives. Presiding Elders of the respective [Center Place] congregations will serve as an extension of the First Presidency. In due course, Bishop's Agents, representing the Presiding Bishopric, will manage temporal affairs and assist in preparing stewards for the Kingdom. Departmental functions will be initiated and carried forward toward spiritual growth and the greater endowment required of the inhabitants of Zion."

OPTIMISM SHARED

Remnant Saints rejoiced at these newly-reactivated possibilities, and to better explain and expound upon them, a pre-conference Lecture Series of nine sessions was announced on various aspects of stewardship topics and the cause of Zion, with emphases lifted from the other two books of scripture: the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. These lectures were given simultaneously at Blue Springs and at the Center--First Congregational Sanctuaries, on Sunday evenings. All presentations were given by designated Melchisedec Priesthood members.

This optimistic and determined mood for accomplishment by the Remnant Saints was captured in this poem written by an 88-year-old member, Elder Fred Moore, as he reminisced after many decades of experience and faithful service. Like many other senior members, he had previously felt discouraged and had struggled with serious doubts that he would live to see the Church he loved authoritatively reordered:

♫ Hear! My people of my Kingdom
I would challenge you today.
I have watched o're you through your trials;
I have been with you all the way.

There was purpose in my planning,
In the separate branches where you stood.
I was pleased at your commitment,
And your will for truth and good.

When evil powers sought your division;
Filled your souls with fear and pride,
I did extend my hand to strengthen,
Those who did so faithfully abide.

Now, the time has come for gathering,
Into a single body all.
Righteousness must sweep the nations;
Satan's plans and powers must fall.

You must be one, my remnant people,
The brave remainder of my fold,
Over which I called my prophet, Joseph;
My Reorganization as of old.

In my cause you shall shine, brightly,
In your full armor, clad with light,
Be a beacon to my children,
Truth shall melt away the night.

Now, 'rouse you up, with single purpose
Stand together, brave and true.
You are the nucleus of my Kingdom;
My Zion shall arise through you!

Now, 'rouse you up, with single purpose
Stand together, brave and true.
You are the nucleus of my Kingdom;
My Zion shall arise through you!

Come together in rejoicing,
Be not ashamed of your given name;
For I will bless my remnant people,
You, my full gospel shall again proclaim! ♪ ♫

It was in this winter period before the 2003 General Conference that two new committees were appointed. They were the Hymnal Preparation Committee, chaired by High Priest Carl VunCannon, Jr. and the Web Site Committee, chaired by Apostle Robert Ostrander and diligently guided technically by Webmaster Kenneth Robb, Jr., of Ontario. It was to be accessed on the Internet by using **www.theremnantchurch.com**.

On March 10, 2003, those Restoration Branches that had originally owned and administered the use of the Blackgum Campgrounds (near Vian, Oklahoma), which had frequently been used for Men's and Youth Retreats, dissolved their corporation and donated the property to the Remnant Church, for its continued use as a campground. This facility was on donated land near Lake Tenkiller, and the lodge had originally been constructed in 1994 by the Saints of nearby Restoration Branches, using their own volunteer labor.

During this exciting pre-conference period, the Remnant Saints were urged to further active service and exemplary stewardship by a fusillade of challenging and uplifting sermons and classroom lectures, many by the Evangelist/Patriarchs, Apostles, High Priests and Seventies. A representative assortment of these, mostly from the central area, were reprinted in *The Hastening Times,* but many more given in a growing number of outlying branches, were said to be equally filled with the Lord's Spirit of urgency. These priesthood messages were supplemented by poems, testimonies, youth activities and women's classes, given or aided by the faithful and supportive sisters who truly functioned as the daughters of Zion.

It was with a knowledge of all the above background that the Presidency also included in their Editorial Comments in *The Hastening Times* (Jan/Feb/Mar, No. 14), the following: *"...Recent meetings with the Quorum of Twelve and the Standing High Council in particular, have brought a shared concern for the unusual opportunities, yet great responsibility, that is placed on the Church to be prepared for the fulfillment of long-standing prophecy concerning the last days. We feel sorrow and a deep sense of loss, as changes in and reinterpretation of beliefs once held sacred combine to accommodate the revisionism of the day. The distress of nations, the breakdown of moral fiber, and the disintegration of the home and family, all combine to make the response of a righteous and dedicated remnant so vitally important.*

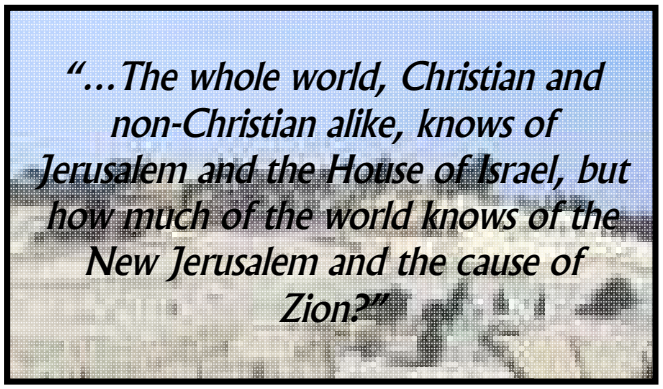
"To all who take seriously these looming issues and sense the urgent need for a living demonstration, before the world, of a people to be a light for all who search, a haven for the pure in heart, and a place where those so minded can labor for the good of all, where each one can make his or her contribution to a just society, there indeed is the heart of the Gospel of the Kingdom [which] the Savior taught and lived. With all those of faith, who long to live out this eternal hope, we claim the promises of peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come. Come then in rejoicing! Come in faith believing! Join your hearts and voices in yet another opportunity to sing His praises, hear His word and find new strength... 'for battles yet to be.'"

Preparations in March included a reminder and emphasis on stewardship accountability. The Saints were counseled in the *News Briefs* with the question, "How much better would it be for us, if we were to show the Lord through our compliance and declaring the commitment of our increase to the cause of His Kingdom? In the words of the familiar hymn, *"But we never can prove The delights of His love Until all on the altar we lay, For the favor He shows, And the joy He bestows, Are for them who will trust and obey."* The Saints were further challenged, as they prepared to meet in General Conference, with this quotation given by Joseph Smith III, to the first Conference of the Reorganization to meet in the Kirtland Temple on April 6, 1883: **"Remember, he is strongest and wisest who is actuated by the kindest spirit."** One hundred twenty years later, the Remnant Saints again prepared to meet for their first time in facilities which they owned, and under the prophetic leadership of the great-grandson of Joseph Smith III, Frederick N. Larsen.

WOMEN CALLED TO PREPARATION

The Remnant women were also called to preparation and challenged with a lengthy invitation by Women's Council leader, Sr. Toby Edwards, as recounted in the following excerpt: *Listening to a minister on Christian radio for whom I have some regard, I was impressed by his pleading call to his*

listeners to pray for the people of Israel...As I answered his request in a quiet prayer, my heart suddenly burned with the urgent necessity for witness to the world of the Restoration Gospel and the cause of Zion that is our responsibility. The whole world, Christian and non-Christian alike, knows of Jerusalem and the House of Israel, but how much of the world knows of the New Jerusalem and the cause of Zion. I thought of our faithful men of the priesthood, the Apostles and Seventy, the men who go out into the world, those who hold cottage meetings, and those who teach and preach and bear witness...I thought of the women of the Restoration and the times in history when they have risen to answer a current need in the cause and the growth of our movement. I thought of the qualities God has given the women that make it so much easier to bear witness: the tender hearts and ease of communication; the friendly relationships with neighbors; the community associations with schools, civic organizations, children's activities, and even social clubs. Men are often so busy with the responsibilities of the Church and providing for the families, that there is no time for the casual, easy relationships that create an atmosphere lending itself to sincere discussion of things of the heart...


"...The whole world, Christian and non-Christian alike, knows of Jerusalem and the House of Israel, but how much of the world knows of the New Jerusalem and the cause of Zion?"

"And so, considering all of the above, I issue to you, the women of the Remnant Church,... an urgent challenge to take a close look at your personal contacts with friends, neighbors, and other community associates. Select those you can picture occupying pews in your congregation or group; pray for them regularly; take every opportunity to talk about your church friends and activities;...introduce them to the cause of Zion which is so dear to your heart...in the community in which you live. Most Christians are aware of the part Jerusalem and the House of Israel will play in the last days, but are they aware that <u>you</u> are a part of the House of Israel and that there will be a <u>New Jerusalem</u> right here in America? Tell them!..."

GENERAL CONFERENCE APRIL 2003

After a Church-wide day of fast on March 30, General Conference was held from April 5-9, 2003 in the partially-renovated facilities of the Gathering Place. It began on Saturday evening with a service of praise and fellowship by the talented musical group, ECHO. Crowds were large and the various sessions were wonderfully focused on the theme, **A Day When All Can Work.** Business sessions were presided over by President Larsen, assisted by his Counselor, David W. Bowerman. Brother Larsen brought the keynote address on Sunday evening. Over 50% of the entire Church attended at least some of the Conference sessions, along with several friends and visitors.

On Monday, the Quorums and Orders were given an Inspired Document, which after review and discussion, was approved overwhelmingly. This revelation called Apostle P. James Buchman to be the Second Counselor to the President, and also called High Priest Wayne A. Bartrow and Seventy Leland V. Collins to be Apostles. These brothers were all appropriately ordained at subsequent services. In addition, three Patriarch/Evangelists, four Seventy and four High Priests, who had been called earlier, were ordained.

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS R-146

Revelation given through Frederick N. Larsen, Prophet and Seer to the Church, April 6, 2003. The work of renewal was quickening; acquisition and preparation of the Gathering Place was demanding a great amount of time and attention. The need for strengthening the role of the First Presidency was becoming more apparent and complete devotion to and execution of the law is made clear. With greater emphasis on missionary work by the Twelve and Seventy a new urgency to move out with all diligence was supported by the addition of several calls to those quorums. Continued steadfastness and obedience is required in preparation for the Bishopric. The revelation was considered, and unanimously approved, by the various councils and quorums, before submission to the Conference body, where it was endorsed and ordered printed in the Doctrine and Covenants as an expression of Divine Will to the Church.

Having made the needs of the Church a matter of prayer and careful thought, the Spirit of our heavenly Father, who guides and directs the prophetic office, brings the following to the Church assembled for Quorum and General Conference approval:

1a. *"It is my will saith the Lord that P. James Buchman is called and should be set apart as a Counselor to the President of the High Priesthood in the Quorum of the First Presidency. This call was made known before, but withheld for reasons sufficient to me.*

His apostleship is now extended in Presidency with his brethren of the Quorum, which is now complete.

b. ***The work lying before the First Presidency of my Church in these last days will be evermore demanding and complete devotion and execution of the law will be required at their hands.***

2a. ***The Spirit saith further, that to fill vacancies in the Quorum of Twelve my servants Wayne A. Bartrow and Leland V. Collins are now called to be special witnesses and take their place among those brethren now serving as the frontline missionaries and Traveling High Council of my Church.***

b. ***The Apostolic Quorum and the Seventy must move out with all diligence to recover those, who rather than obey my law and the pattern of Renewal, have lost their way in following the precepts of men. The Apostles and the Seventy must also seek out those who will listen to my voice and respond to my Gospel of Salvation.***

3. ***It is wisdom in me that my servant V. Lee Killpack be set apart as President of the Quorum of Twelve. He has acted in the past with great sensitivity to the leading of my Spirit and I will bless him with wisdom and discernment as he provides direction and leadership to the Quorum.***

Further inspiration directs:

4. ***You have sensed a great need for the office and calling of a Bishop. It is not yet time for that office to be filled, but he is among you and is now being prepared. Until then, my Remnant people, you must continue to be more steadfast in obedience to the Law of Temporalities.***

5a. ***I have given into your hands that property known as the "Gathering Place." It has come to pass, not only by much sacrifice and zeal of my people, but by my design. Assemble and worship in that place often and I will be in your midst.***

b. ***This is only the beginning of many such endeavors to gather my people to the "Center Place of Zion" and prepare them for the day of my coming.***

6a. ***The Church as a whole is commended for the Spirit of unity and understanding that is among you. And, if those who lead you continue in the spirit of truth and righteousness and humility, I will pour out my Spirit in abundance.***

b. ***Remember, it is still day when preparation can be made for the coming of the Bridegroom. Prepare the Bride. Put oil in your vessels and trim your lamps. But take comfort in the knowledge that a secure foundation is being laid upon which my Gospel shall go forth, even as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands, and that my Zion will unfold before you.***

c. ***Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Thus saith the Spirit. Amen."***

Respectfully submitted,
Frederick N. Larsen
April 6, 2003, Independence, Missouri

PRESIDENT LARSEN'S CONFERENCE ADDRESS

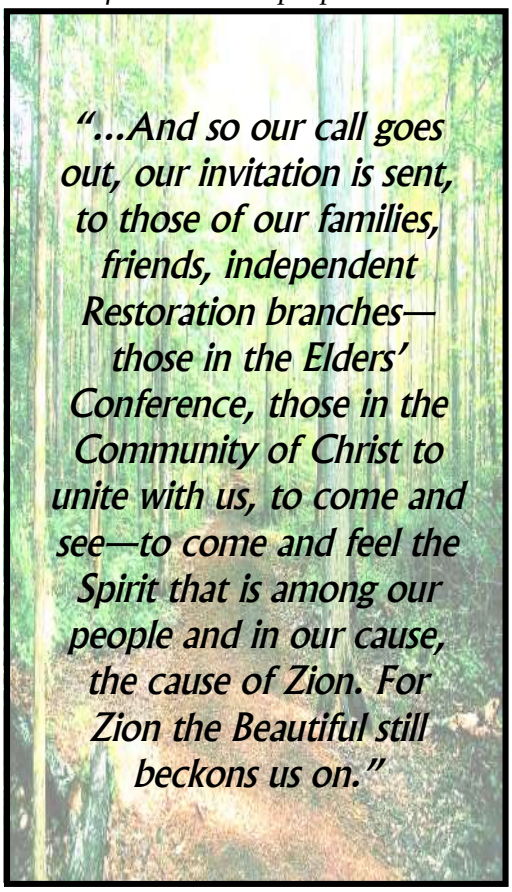
In his Conference sermon, President Larsen spoke of his many concerns for the Church, as the following excerpts testify: *"Yes, we have come a long way in a short time. We have been able to process a number of priesthood calls, all of which are in accordance with that given in the law. I will not go into the financial success of our efforts, only to acknowledge the unprecedented and sacrificial giving of our people to this cause. We will get into that when we talk about the budget in our business sessions. You folks are well aware that we have a substantial investment in this 26 acres of property here in the Center Place of Zion. It has been nothing short of miraculous—the construction of this facility and its finishing under the direction of Brother Joe Ben Stone, and many, many others. Nevertheless, there are many things that cannot be done without the support and the financial contributions of our people. We live in a day of relative prosperity, and our people have been of one mind in putting their treasures where they belong.*

The thing that has guided us all along has been the principle of stewardship and the idea of building a literal Zion. We have much to be grateful for. I don't want to use the word "pride"; it has brought more civilizations and groups of *people down to the depths of despair and ruination than any other characteristic that exists in the minds of men. Let's use the word gratified. We are pleased with our accomplishments, and we should be! The Germans have a saying that relates to what I really want to say: "Erfolge muss man langsam locken, sonnst verschlugt man sich an Ihnen." It literally says, "Success must be 'ladled out' slowly, or one might choke on it."...There is still plenty to do. Indeed, we have just begun!*

There are two immediate areas of effort, the first is use of this Gathering Place. I really was not much in favor of that name to begin with, when it was presented to the Conference last year, but the voice of the people prevailed for the committee that recommended it. It is obvious that it has been more and more prophetic. Somehow, that's the way things work out; that's a beautiful name for this place...The second area I think we need to address very soon is Outreach. For those who read the Statistical Report you observe that our increase was not that great last

year. People did not come flooding to us. In fact, as it has always been in many ways, those who preach the truth have always run into obstacles.

There are those who simply won't listen to us. When those ears are opened one day, our numbers will increase tremendously. The area of missionary outreach will be an area we will address in the very near future. Last year's admonition from this Prophetic office counseled, "It is yet day when all can work...." Our Conference theme is A DAY WHEN ALL CAN WORK. That counsel through the prophetic office went on to declare a requirement. This requirement placed upon this humble servant the need to prepare our people before the "night" comes. It is yet day when all can work, but for many the opportunity to work will have passed. What is so ominous about the night? What does night bring? Darkness, fear, seclusion, bleakness, thieves and robbery; it brings the condition of being uninformed.


"...And so our call goes out, our invitation is sent, to those of our families, friends, independent Restoration branches—those in the Elders' Conference, those in the Community of Christ to unite with us, to come and see—to come and feel the Spirit that is among our people and in our cause, the cause of Zion. For Zion the Beautiful still beckons us on."

[As a nation] we are at war in the Mideast with an Iraqi regime. The state of Israel is in a conflict with the Palestinians. We know the relationship to the state of Israel that exists, for it portends that future with which we are very much tied, in terms of that "old Jerusalem" and that "new Jerusalem" here in the Center Place of Zion. They are inexorably tied together. What happens there will affect what happens here. Many nations around the world are [currently] unsupportive of the United States of America. That never used to be the situation, but it is now. Time after time in the last decade, this country has gone to the aid of other nations in this world, has it not? We are the most generous country in the world.

Will the United States become the liberator of evil in the world? What happens after Iraq? Is it Iran, then North Korea, or some other country we haven't confronted as yet? Some people tend to sit idly by and hope that words of "peace and justice" will curb this trend. Not so, my friends, not so! Mankind is basically selfish and those who seek power over the innocent will always do so, and they will never heed the words of "peace and justice" and live by them.

Our own country is experiencing civil uprisings. I have been astonished, perhaps as many of you have, by the number of protestors in this country. It's not so bad when you have a few hundred, but when we have 100,000 people who come out and protest—it is obvious that this country is in trouble. Something is happening; I think we are in the twilight. Classes of people in this country are becoming pitted against each other—the rich get richer, the poor get poorer. That is a condition that the concept of the Kingdom of God on earth—even Zion—will cure...And so our call goes out, our invitation is sent, to those of our families, friends, independent Restoration branches—those in the Elders' Conference, those in the Community of Christ to unite with us, to come and see—to come and feel the Spirit that is among our people and in our cause, the cause of Zion. For Zion the Beautiful still beckons us on.

Our theme for this Conference rings loud and clear—"A Day When All Can Work." You might rightfully ask "Brother Fred, what work are you talking about?" We will have reunions, retreats and camps planned for our future uplift; but beyond that let me suggest three important areas of work and/or preparation that we must make before the [spiritual] "night" comes, when we are no longer able to work. ***Number one is personal preparation****, and the word which ties so strongly to it...called sanctification. We will hear more and more about it. That word simply means to "make holy." As soon as we understand what holiness is in our lives, then we can begin to work on that.* ***Number two: Evangelism****. Let us evangelize by bringing the love of God into the hearts of men and the lives of men into the Kingdom of God. If we can do nothing else but share our love and concern with the person next to us, with our neighbor, we will have participated in the idea of evangelism...There are hundreds out there who haven't heard of the good news—the gospel of Jesus Christ in its simplicity. They need to hear it from us.* ***Third is our group participation: the Church, the Gathering, and Zion.*** *We continue to fill offices of the priesthood as the Lord calls them, and we continue to*

preach Christ and Him crucified. Everyone of you brethren of the priesthood, in the next three or four Sundays that you have to preach, I want to hear you preach Christ and Him crucified. We need to continue to study and teach, to expound the gospel...People who are going to bring Zion into existence ought to live so that it can be said of them, ***'Out from them shall Zion shine forth, to the glory of God.'*** *Yes, my dear Saints, ZION THE BEAUTIFUL STILL BECKONS US ON! And yes, IT IS STILL DAY WHEN ALL CAN WORK!*

SUMMER 2003

In the summer of 2003, the First Congregation (of Independence, MO) moved from the Church Office Complex to the larger sanctuary of the Worship Center Building at the Gathering Place. Center Congregation continued to worship in the Sanctuary at the Office Complex, thereby providing a good geographical spread for the three central congregations in the metropolitan area. In addition, four wonderful Reunions were held during this season, the latest one being added at the Guthrie Grove Reunion Grounds, in Iowa. The First Presidency reported that several department heads were actively pursuing ambitious programs of development. These included the Women's work by Sister Toby Edwards, the Religious Education by Bro. Carl VunCannon, Jr. and the Youth Ministries by Bro. Gregory and Sr. Marcianna Turner, as well as better statistical information by Bro. Paul Sawyer, General Church Secretary and Recorder.

In a move aimed at establishing more formalized priesthood training on a timely basis, a series of Priesthood Training Classes were conducted after the Reunions for 25 brethren, who had been newly ordained at various times since 2001. These sessions were held on August 9-10 in Independence. Further developmental sessions were provided for all priesthood during the Fall Priesthood Assembly. These were held at the Gathering Place on October 25-26. Later in the fall season, a series of six Priesthood Classes were separately provided for each of the Quorums and Orders.

Throughout the summer and fall, further construction work was proceeding at the Gathering Place, as the activity schedule permitted. Funds were provided for youth facilities in the Conference Center, including basketball and volleyball courts. Surveying work was also begun for preparation of engineering drawings to provide a permanent six-inch water line, containing outside fire hydrants, for the lower portion of the property. A sacrificial offering was carried out to provide working funds for initial operation, in order to retire the small remaining debt which had been incurred.

In October, President Larsen and Apostle Lee Killpack traveled to Europe to make contact with the Francis Custers family, in Brussels, Belgium. This was a unique and productive visit, because it ultimately enabled this perceptive family to unite with the Remnant Church, the first such members in Belgium. The contact had been possible when Bro. Custers was led to notice our Web Site, and began a correspondence with Apostle Killpack. During their exchanges, which had to be done using a translating computer program since neither party spoke the other's language, several members of the Custers family were baptized. Bro. Custers was also ordained an Elder. A few months later he and his oldest daughter had the pleasure of attending the 2004 General Conference in Independence. Other contacts in several parts of the world continue to be monitored and encouraged through the Church Web Site—by the ever-alert missionary arm of the Church.

During the Priesthood Conference on October 26, 2003, President Larsen presented an Inspired Document which had thrilling implications for re-establishing the Bishopric. The text of this message, which became Section R-147, follows:

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS R-147

1 The Spirit of Inspiration through my servant the President of the High Priesthood and of the Church directs that it is now time to implement more fully the temporal law of my Church. It shall be in fulfillment of, and according to, the pattern given previously in my law.

2 a. My servant W. Kevin Romer, if willing to serve, is now called from among his brethren of the High Priesthood to the office of Presiding Bishop of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He has a deep abiding faith and testimony of the divinity and renewal of my Church, and if he accepts, will be blessed with all the powers of heaven at his disposal.

b. This call is made now because the time grows short for the redemption of my Zion, and the work of the Bishopric must proceed with all haste. Preparation must be made before the next General Conference in order that the work towards fulfillment of the temporal law may be hastened.

3 a. My servant Kevin Romer shall be free to select his counselors as wisdom and inspiration direct.

b. This calling also bestows upon my servant the office of President of the Aaronic Priesthood, which priesthood has the power to administer the outward

ordinances and the ministering of angels. This is in harmony with the covenants and commandments already given.

4 Opportunity for approval of this call should be granted to the priesthood quorums here assembled, and later, approval afforded to the membership body at the next General Conference.

5 a. The Spirit directs further: I have set in my Church those offices of priesthood necessary to bring to pass the building of my earthly Kingdom-even Zion. It is now the duty of every man called to priesthood office to magnify his calling and make preparation before the night comes.

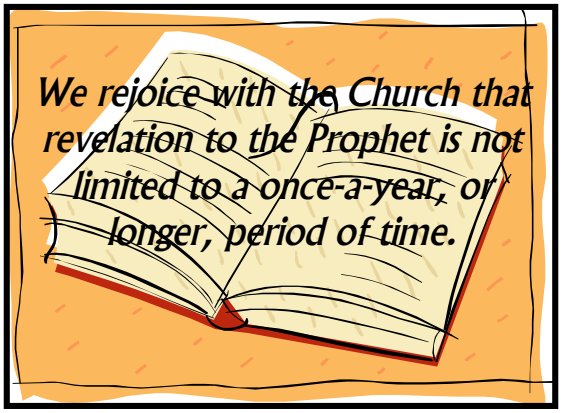
b. I will honor those who respond in righteousness with the powers of heaven, for it will require those powers for the work that lies ahead.

c. Continue to seek the endowment you so eagerly look for, which will only come through the further sanctification of your everyday lives.

6 a. I have blessed you thus far, my little flock, speaking concerning the membership at large, with many gifts and my Holy Spirit as you have followed the pattern in the restitution of my Church.

b. Continue to be faithful, humble, and unified in your worship and service to me and, as promised earlier, my Zion will unfold before you. Thus saith the Spirit. Amen.

Your servant in Christ,
Frederick N. Larsen,
President of the Church
October 26, 2003
Approved as R-147
on April 3, 2004.



In the official statement, placed in the Oct/Nov/Dec 2003 issue (No. 17), of *The Hastening Times*, the circumstances surrounding receipt of this document were explained. The following excerpt gives the most pertinent details:

"...It should be recognized that a great many of the revelations which now constitute the Doctrine and Covenants were received and presented, to both individuals and small groups of leaders at various times, without the benefit of General Conference authorization, which would come later. Similarly, a few of the revelations which came through Joseph Smith III, in the early development of the Reorganization, were not formally adopted by a General Conference until a later and more convenient time.

In the present situation the President of the Church, Frederick N. Larsen, was impressed to proceed with prophetic direction as is evident from the document which follows, when the priesthood would be assembled in organized quorums. This was carried out with the intent that full implementation would occur later. The advisability of a specially called General Conference in late November 2003 was finally rejected, it being concluded that an unusual burden of travel would be placed on the membership, recognizing that such a gathering is already scheduled for April 2004, a short four months later.

By way of further explanation, and to clarify the existing situation, Elder W. Kevin Romer will be recognized as the Presiding Bishop "Designate" until formal approval by the body can be obtained. He will then be ordained as the law provides. In the interim, Brother Romer will have the opportunity to familiarize himself with the temporal affairs of the Church, and choose counselors as he may feel directed.

We rejoice with the Church that revelation to the Prophet is not limited to a once-a-year, or longer, period of time. With the more complete structure of the Church continuing to unfold, the call has again been sounded for the priesthood, and the Saints, to further prepare spiritually for the great events clearly before us. As the Church is faithful, the future blessings of heaven and 'commandments, not a few' can be expected." The brethren rejoiced as the Priesthood Assembly was concluded on this high spiritual plain!

In November 2003, a request from Elder P. James Buchman was received that, for personal and family reasons, he be released as Counselor to the President, and a member of the First Presidency. Appreciation and fraternal best wishes to both Bro. and Sr. Buchman were extended from leading Church authorities. This was conveyed by Official Announcement on November 10, 2003.

Apostle Wayne A. Bartrow returned from a trip to the Detroit MI area, where he met with approximately 30 Saints in the Garden City area, and officially organized the First Michigan Branch of the Remnant Church. Elder Arlyn Karpeles was elected to be the Branch President. Thus, on this hopeful note, another very productive and promising year in the development of God's Remnant people was ended. ■

EVENTS OF YEAR 2004

In characterizing the Remnant Church "situation" in the January 2004 *News Briefs*, President Frederick N. Larsen quoted an 1871 excerpt from the remarks made by his great-grandfather, Joseph Smith III:

> *"There are times in the history of every organization...when a recast of its situation...may not only be opportune, but conducive to the well-being of that organization. We consider the time propitious for presenting to the members of the Reorganization [now preserved in the Remnant Church]–to all and every one of the many once holding 'the faith' whether now connected with any so-named Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, or waiting in careless security for the 'good time coming,' or still more carelessly in stolid, if not in wicked indifference, throwing religion to the winds,–and to the world, as comprehensive a review of the situation as we may be capable of.*
>
> *"In what follows we shall write freely, stating our belief and our convictions, urging in defense of those that we think need defending what seems to us to be good grounds for defense, seeking no exculpation against just censure nor deprecating the just indignation of any. However, while fearless against antagonism, whether proper or erroneous, we have a desire to commend to the thoughtful and the prudent, the wise and true, and in fact, to all within the fold, a careful weighing of the principles involved, that a more extended and better assimilation of theory and practice may be had in the Church."*

When young Brother Joseph wrote these words, he too was struggling with overcoming the well-developed 19th century indifference of many Latter Day Saints to the efforts of reorganization that he had been guiding for some eleven years. By then, it had been twenty-seven years since his father's untimely death at the hands of the mob, and the resulting confusion and fragmentation that had taken place soon afterwards. By comparison, the Remnant Church in 2004 had been functioning for less than five years, the last two under the leadership of Frederick N. Larsen. Yet, among Remnant members there already was the same feeling "that valuable time was wasting," with this apparent lack of response and sometimes outright indifference, being exhibited by many of the independent Restoration Saints.

Under the wise administrative leadership of President Larsen, and his seasoned counselor, David Bowerman, the momentum of this new 21st century reorganization was rapidly building. There were five major reunions planned for 2004, the newest addition an Iowa Reunion at Guthrie Grove, sponsored by the Saints of the Missouri Valley (Iowa) Branch. Two Youth Camps were being planned at the Blackgum, OK Campgrounds. In addition, a longer General Conference was needed, which was planned for April 2-7, 2004. During the past year, progress toward further outfitting the Conference Center building had proceeded vigorously. Other doctrinal and procedural matters had also been under review, as the following summary on Marriage, Family and Moral Values, released by the Standing High Council will attest. With the release of the full statement, the Church intention was to reassure our membership and inquiring friends that the position of the Remnant Church has not changed with the increasingly indulgent political and moral winds of our modern times, but has remained firmly rooted in the unchanging standards of the everlasting Christian gospel and its Scriptures.

AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND MORAL VALUES

Responding to the evident need for a current statement relating to a number of social, moral, and ethical issues, we are pleased to issue the following statement for guidance to the Church and by way of information for public dissemination. –The First Presidency

Adherents of the gospel, restored to earth by divine intervention April 6, 1830 through the prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., have long been aware of warnings to [about] these latter days. Further, we of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, with sober-minded and concerned persons of many religious persuasions, observe with alarm the deterioration of moral standards, and the encroachment of evil and its effect upon the physical and spiritual well-being of humankind everywhere. Consequently, we view with concern the impact of these destructive elements upon the sanctity of marriage, the family, and other institutions ordained of God for the well-being of humanity.

WE AFFIRM that all human beings, both male and female, are created "in the image of God." The Holy Scriptures teach us that natural [unconverted] man is an enemy to God and became separated from the Creator by rebellion and pride. That separation required redemption and thus the great plan of salvation was taught from the beginning and has been reiterated through the ages of time. (Gen. 6:61, I.V.; Mos 8:28, etc.; D&C 18:2h, etc.)

It has been further declared that natural unredeemed mankind will become carnal, sensual and devilish when separated from God and give themselves over to every imaginable sin with reckless abandon. Because of this all-too-obvious abandonment of the principles of righteousness, virtue, and goodness, we sense an urgent need to restate long-held positions of the Church. The onslaught of violence and abandonment of righteous standards are becoming more prevalent in almost every form and are being exploited by the media in grosser and more insidious ways. The pressures in society for relaxed standards, aided by recent civil judicial rulings, clearly signify that the very bedrock of societal order, the sacrament of marriage and the institution of family, is under attack.

For these, and many other reasons, there is an urgent need for the influence and application of Christlike behavior in our interpersonal relations. The Standing High Council of the Remnant Church has therefore prepared and offers this statement of, and commitment to proclaim and live out, these principles of His Church.

THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE–We declare, as a fundamental principle of the gospel of Jesus Christ, our commitment to the sanctity of marriage based upon the divine plan, that one man shall have one wife, and one woman, one husband, in harmony with the creation of, and commission to, Adam and Eve our first parents. [The full statement affirms the privilege and responsibility of bearing and nurturing children in the divinely-appointed institution of marriage, and advises that reported or observed incidents of children's molestation should be promptly reported to civil authorities. The Church upholds the practice of chastity, and neither the sin of fornication nor adultery are countenanced in the law of Christ. Mothers and fathers will be held responsible before God for the discharge of these obligations and against any practices which lead to the disintegration of marriage and family life, and the encroachment of unnatural and sinful alternate lifestyles.]

HOMOSEXUALITY–We affirm in the strongest terms that the advocating of and engaging in any homosexual activity, or relationship, is sinful and contrary to the laws of God. We therefore reconfirm former action by the Standing High Council of the Reorganized Church of October 18, 1962 as follows: "The concern of the Church in connection with the practice of homosexuality is to set up safeguards against it, to protect the innocent and unsuspecting against enticements to it, and to reclaim those who engage in it." In the discharge of its responsibilities in relation to the growing promotion and acceptance of homosexuality the Church must support those teachings and relationships which promote normal and healthy Christlike associations, and offer guidance to all in the ministry who are called upon to provide preventive and remedial teaching and counseling. A basic essential toward forsaking such unnatural practice is that the individual shall, him-or herself, have a strong desire to repent and forsake such temptations or involvements. [It should be noted that the above quoted statement of Rules and Resolutions no longer represents current guidance by the Community of Christ Church. The full statement of the Remnant Church provides for removal from a leadership position of any individual found to be involved in practicing or promoting homosexuality with others. Priesthood members found to be so involved shall be placed under silence, with ministerial labor to be promptly performed to the end that they may be reclaimed from such practice. Any member practicing or advocating homosexuality and persisting therein after labor, shall be brought to trial before a Church court, and if found guilty should be excommunicated from the Church.]

SAME GENDER UNION–The growing acceptance and practice of same-gender unions, (i.e., men with men, and women with women), is sinful and contrary to God's divine plan for family life and procreation. Therefore, be it known that the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints will neither countenance, have part in, nor look with any approval whatsoever upon the union, bonding, or any other similar identifiable process, whether civil or religious, of individuals of the same sex. [Any priesthood member found to be supportive of such unions shall be placed under ministerial silence. The full statement on marriage relationships should be consulted, particularly as set forth in D&C 111 and other citations in all three standard books of Scripture.]

PORNOGRAPHY–We hereby acknowledge with grave concern the increasing acceptance of, and involvement in, the growing presence of pornography [particularly on many sites of the World Wide Web of the Internet] in society. We further declare it to be, in all

its insidious forms, both spiritually and morally destructive to the human character and spirit. The position of the Church shall be to warn against it, and teach and practice a level of saintly life free from the debasing effects of its presence. [The dictionary defines pornography as writings, pictures, etc. intended to arouse sexual desire.] Our dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ and His standards of righteousness for all of life requires that we use every means to urge against the debasing of human beings and the resultant inclination toward carnal and sensual instincts so destructive to the higher levels of life required of all who will come unto Him and His kingdom.

After careful and prayerful deliberation, by issuing the above statement of belief and practice, we hereby declare that members of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints are called to live exemplary lives while proclaiming against the inroads of all of the above morally-debasing and spiritually-destructive elements, exercising every opportunity to uphold and support honorable men and women in public office who will legislate against any form of advertising, lifestyle, or monetary benefit derived from the use, distribution, or promotion thereof.–The Standing High Council, February 12, 2004.

GENERAL CONFERENCE HELD IN APRIL

An outstanding General Conference was held during the first week of April. Attendance at this Conference reached 612 and consisted of Saints from twenty states, one Canadian province, and the nation of Belgium. There were now 19 organized branches, with membership interest expressed by several other groups. Not only was the Inspired Document previously received in October, 2003 approved and numbered (R-147), but later in the week, another Inspired Message was received, considered and approved (R-148). In this latter revelation, two ordinations were called for, one for a second Presidential Counselor, and the other for an addition to the Council of Twelve. Both ordinations were approved and took place shortly thereafter.

Another Conference highlight was the presentation on Tuesday, April 6, of a special service honoring the 174th anniversary of the 1830 organizing of the Church by those six young men, led by Joseph Smith Jr. Later, by a letter of direction from President Larsen, P/E Conrad R. Faulk was blessed by the First Presidency in harmony with historical precedent, to function as Acting Presiding Patriarch, thus permitting the future giving of a more clearly-defined leadership to the important work of the Order of Patriarch/Evangelists.

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS R-148

In mid-2003 Elder P. James Buchman found it necessary, for personal reasons, to resign from the First Presidency, leaving that quorum without a third member. During the weeks preceding the 2004 General Conference, President Larsen received the following revelation which provided for filling the First Presidency by the naming of Elder Wayne A. Bartrow of the Quorum of Twelve and the addition of Elder Casper Kaat to the latter Quorum. Each of these brethren, along with the Presiding Bishop Designate, would be ordained at appropriate services during the 2004 Conference. Presiding Bishop Designate Romer had selected High Priests Gregory A. Turner and Albert V. Burdick to be his counselors. At this same conference, by a letter of instruction from President Larsen, Elder Conrad R. Faulk would be "blessed," according to historic precedent, to serve as Acting Presiding Patriarch. In addition to the foregoing provisions, the Church was once again called to consecrate its energy and resources to building up the kingdom of God on earth. By a unanimous vote the Conference authorized inclusion of the revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants.

As time for the General Conference has approached, and in fulfilling my role as Prophet, Seer and Revelator, I have presented the needs of the Church to our Heavenly Father. In earnest prayer for guidance, the following was received by the Voice of Inspiration on March 10, 2004. It was received as a quickening of the mind and felt in the depths of my soul. It is now presented to the Quorums and Councils of the Church and to the membership for their concurrence as divine guidance.

Thus saith the Spirit:

1 a. The responsibility of the First Presidency to carry forth the work of my Church must continue in earnest as time grows short for the building up of my Kingdom on earth.

b. To complete the Quorum, it is expedient in me that one who has served faithfully as an Apostle in my Church is now called to the Presidency.

c. Therefore, let my servant Elder Wayne A. Bartrow be set apart as a Counselor to the President of the High Priesthood and a member of the Quorum of

the First Presidency. His witness of my Gospel, both in the written and spoken word, is a delight unto me, and I will continue to bless him with power from on high.

2 a. The Quorum of Twelve have been diligent in their calling, and though at times discouraged by the lack of response to my Gospel message, great things lie ahead for them in the days to come. I will continue to go with them as they reach out to all who will listen.

b. Their numbers should be increased, and to that end, Elder Casper Kaat is chosen to be a special witness to my people and unto the world. He is now called to the High Priesthood and should be set apart as an Apostle in the Quorum of Twelve.

c. He has a vibrant testimony of the Latter Day Restoration of my Gospel and will be a blessing to many.

By further direction of the Spirit:

3 a. You, my people, have demonstrated, by your adherence to the law given in my word, that in your unity you have found strength to overcome the temptations around you.

b. Through sacrifice and discipline in your lives your righteousness will allow you to receive my power, for it will require power from on high to overcome and build up my Kingdom, even Zion, in these last days.

4 a. Great blessings will come to you, my faithful remnant, as you implement the temporal portion of my Celestial Law now to be set before you by the Bishop. He, and those who counsel him, are a blessing unto me, and their guidance will assist in leading you into the paths of my Zion. Much will be required of you, but great will be the blessings.

b. Many are once again seeing the light that shines in the darkness, and as they see your righteousness and the unfolding of my Zion, they too will come to join your ranks.

5 a. Stand steadfast my people, for the buffeting of Satan will attempt to thwart your efforts to prepare yourselves for my coming.

b. But remember, remember I am with you even to the end.

c. Behold, I desire to come quickly; prepare the Bride for the marriage; trim your lamps; sanctify yourselves; and be secure in the knowledge that my endowing power awaits your response. Thus saith the Spirit. Amen.

Respectfully submitted,
Frederick N. Larsen
President of the High Priesthood and the Church
Independence, Missouri, April 5, 2004

APOSTOLIC FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

Shortly after this General Conference, the list of Apostolic Field Assignments was announced. The territories of the contiguous 48 United States along with Canada were divided into seven regions. Assignments, guided by perceived current missionary opportunities, were made as follows: Northwest Field–Apostles V. Lee Killpack and Steve R. Church, assisted by Seventy James K. Watkins; North Central Field–Apostle Gary L. Argotsinger; Northeast Field–Apostle Robert E. Ostrander, assisted by Seventies John L. Dollen and Richard L. Wilson; Central Field (including Europe)–Apostle Casper Kaat; Southeast Field–Apostle James L. Rogers, assisted by Seventies Jake F. Simmons and Richard H. Trimble; and South Central Field–Apostle Leland V. Collins, assisted by Seventies Donald W. Burnett and Duane K. Price. For the present, the Southwest Field will be addressed by special assignment.

Interesting membership news and reports of progress being made toward the required level of stewardship dedication appeared in midyear issues of the *News Briefs:*

MIDYEAR NEWS FROM THE QUORUM OF TWELVE AND THE SEVENTY

The Quorum of Twelve and the Seventy continue to respond to inquiries from across the continental United States and from abroad. Members of the missionary arm of the Church, aware of their calling to open the work of the Church in new places throughout the world, pray for the spirit of discernment to direct them in their efforts. Every Sunday evening during January through March, these Quorums sponsored a missionary series in the Center Place focused on aspects of "The Restoration Gospel." Subsequently, nearly 200 videotapes were distributed to branches and individuals who requested them.

Three trips to the Pacific Northwest resulted in further encouragements to two new groups, now meeting in Eugene, Oregon and in the Fruitland, Idaho-Ontario, Oregon area. Three other trips to Ohio and West Virginia resulted in similarly strengthening a group now meeting in New Martinsville, W. VA. In the Southeastern Field, a new study group was meeting in North Florida.

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDING BISHOPRIC

At the April General Conference, an important booklet entitled *"Zionic Development and Celestial Law"* was unveiled, with a copy given to each family; the early response has been gratifying. Explanatory classes given in many branches and congregations by members of the Bishopric also met with positive response. To further assist in this effort, Bishop Romer was scheduled to attend all summer Reunions, at which events he taught additional classes.

At the April General Conference, an important booklet entitled *"Zionic Development and Celestial Law"* was unveiled, with a copy given to each family; the early response has been gratifying.

All members of the Bishopric have taken the lead by being the first families to consecrate their Stewardships to God's purposes. Some Saints have already returned their "Surplus Accounting Forms" and requested a review meeting, so they can "lay all things before the Bishop" (as required in D&C 72:3e). As we move forward in this process, faithful members will begin to see Zion unfolding before us. ***"Many are once again seeing the light that shines in the darkness, and as they see your righteousness and the unfolding of my Zion, they too will come to join your ranks."*** (D&C R-148:4b)

As the momentum of this important year continued to build, members of the First Presidency were prompted to make the following comments. "...Viewing the world scene, tension and unrest are so apparent. As long ago prophesied, men's hearts [increasingly] turn to fear, which not only engenders reckless abandon, but often despair–which is reflected in the [fatalistic] resisting of moral standards and righteous relationships so essential to the redemption of humankind. Long ago Nephi warned his people: ***'For the right way is to believe in Christ and deny him not;...and Christ is the Holy One of Israel;...and they*** [the Gentiles] ***have built up many churches; nevertheless they put down the power and the miracles of God...and preach...their own wisdom, and their own learning.'*** (2 Nephi 11:53) How seriously do we take this prophetic warning today? Or, how much are we comforted by our abundance, and consequently fail to understand the judgments that await this promised land once again? By the power of God, a remnant has been called, empowered, and commissioned once again to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion. Let us not be deterred, nor forsake the high calling imposed upon us, and all who will with broken hearts and contrite spirits hear and heed that call. Rather, let us be steadfast and believing in this 'day of choosing.'"

As the busy summer of 2004 drew to an end, Church Headquarters informed the membership that the several Reunions had been well attended. The Oklahoma Reunion at Wilburton registered 93; Colorado at Cedaredge (near Delta) 84; Iowa Reunion at Guthrie Grove 65; Idaho Reunion held south of Twin Falls 54; and Center Place (in-town at the Gathering Place) Reunion 405. The Junior and Senior High Camps at Blackgum, OK were also well attended, with the aid of a number of helpful adult assistants.

THEME HELPS

For several years, the local leaders and department heads have benefited from yearly and monthly theme helps, as an aid to organizing and guiding the leaders' emphases in worship services. For year 2004, the theme was "Trim Your Lamps." The theme for calendar year 2005 is "Carry Forth the Work of My Church." This effort provides worship planners with detailed weekly theme suggestions along with several associated scriptures. For several years, Seventy Jake F. Simmons has prepared these helps in booklet form. Pastors, Department Leaders and Group Elders have expressed appreciation for this unifying aid.

As Fall began, High Priest Thomas Moats was assigned by the First Presidency to assist the leaders at the large Sperry, OK Branch in various areas of administrative and leadership development, and counseling when requested. Brother Moats is still widely known and respected at Sperry Branch, as his family had worshiped there for a number of years before gathering to the Center Place.

After several years of very effective leadership, Sister Dorothy "Toby" Edwards asked for relief and was replaced by Sister Kay Van Fleet, as Chairman of the General Church Women's Council. Sister Bonnie Damon also found it necessary to resign because of increased family and career teaching responsibilities. Sister Toby agreed to continue to serve on the Council as her health permits.

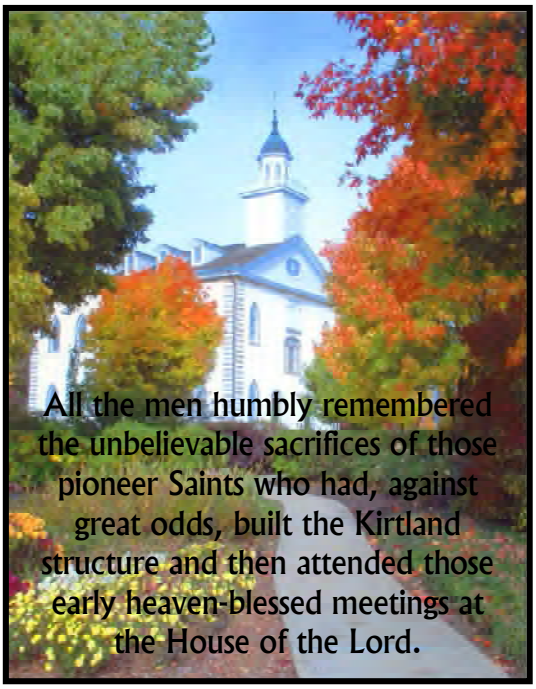
AN HISTORIC PRIESTHOOD ASSEMBLY TO WORSHIP TOGETHER IN KIRTLAND TEMPLE

For many months, the First Presidency under the assigned leadership of Counselor Wayne Bartrow had been conferring with priesthood Quorum Leaders on the logistics of worshiping together in the historic Kirtland Temple. Permission had been obtained from the Community of Christ for two 3-hour periods of exclusive use on October 23-24, 2004.

The priesthood brethren, supported by the general membership, had been preparing spiritually for many months. This solemn preparation was climaxed in the Fall with a series of three announced group meetings, simultaneously held in the sanctuary at the Gathering Place, and at certain other distant Branches, on Sept. 19, Oct. 3 and Oct. 17. The priesthood alone met together for two of these meetings, and were joined by their families and all available local membership on Oct. 3. A high degree of preparatory reverence and dedication, appropriate to the challenges incumbent upon us all in this late latter day, were evidenced at all these meetings.

In order that as many of the younger men as possible who were still working could obtain the necessary time away from their jobs, the time and expenses for travel and overnight accommodations for the 2500-mile round trip had to be minimized. Arrangements were also made to visit, in the limited time available, several other historic sites in Kirtland, such as the Whitney Store and the Mormon Visitors Center. Most of the men from the Western Missouri area went in two 47-passenger buses, restroom equipped, and, using relief drivers picked up on the way, drove straight through to Kirtland, both going and coming. Some other men formed van-pools and started earlier to allow for overnight sleeping, and some drove or flew from other areas of the country, to arrive simultaneously at Kirtland on Friday morning.

The two buses left at 7:00 A.M. on Thursday morning, Oct. 22, from the Gathering Place, and returned about 7:00 P.M. on Sunday, Oct. 25. The only motel accommodation that was necessary was for Friday night at Kirtland. The weather was mild but periodically rainy, and the trip was gratefully made without any traffic incidents or delays.


All the men humbly remembered the unbelievable sacrifices of those pioneer Saints who had, against great odds, built the Kirtland structure and then attended those early heaven-blessed meetings at the House of the Lord.

While this historic trip was quite demanding, particularly of the many older men involved (it required about 27 hours one-way, with stops made only for meals and use of restrooms), it was made in an excellent spirit of desired participation. All the men humbly remembered the unbelievable sacrifices of those pioneer Saints who had, against great odds, built the Kirtland structure and then attended those early heaven-blessed meetings at the House of the Lord. This was before any division or martyrdom had fragmented the young Church, and in 2004 this trip marvelously achieved its announced goals in every way.

INSPIRED COUNSEL

During the last 3-hour session in the Temple, Inspired Counsel was delivered by the Prophet to the assembled priesthood. Some of the most pertinent highlights of this are quoted here:

Through His servant, it was made known that the Lord acknowledged the sincere effort and sacrifice by some to be present. He further acknowledged hearing the prayers of the Saints on behalf of those assembled, and He expressed pleasure with their preparation to receive the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. The brethren were made aware

that because of the experience they were being permitted to share, they would go forth stronger and more spiritually prepared than when they came. The Lord further declared that the priesthood, His servants, must be further prepared as never before to assist in bringing to pass His Kingdom.

In words of solemn counsel, the brethren were called to give heed to the "Word of Wisdom" in order that their bodies might be strong for the work that lies ahead, and further that those who are frail may be given strength. The Lord conveyed that He was pleased with the call for obedience to the Law of Consecration, indicating that all should now consider carefully their just wants and needs in relation to the temporal law.

Regarding the prayers and concerns of "many of My people" relating to Zionic endeavors, the voice of the Spirit indicated it [the future Zionic enterprise] shall begin on land lying east of the city of Independence, this to be the beginning of a community effort. As many begin to gather to the Center Place of Zion, expansion of that location will be necessary. It will in time be extended along a western corridor from the north to the south of the state of Missouri. This area will in time be filled with those who come to assist in the building up of the Kingdom, and this will occur as the labors of the priesthood, and the Saints called to assist, begin to bear fruit.

"…the voice of the Spirit indicated it [the future Zionic enterprise] shall begin on land lying east of the city of Independence, this to be the beginning of a community effort. As many begin to gather to the Center Place of Zion, expansion of that location will be necessary. It will in time…be filled with those who come to assist in the building up of the Kingdom…"

A major burden of preparing for the execution of the Law of Consecration and the beginning of a community of righteous people will bear heavily upon the Bishopric. President Larsen stated that in time other bishops will be called to assist with that work....

With reference to the Temple in Zion, though the time was not yet at hand, the Spirit confirmed that it will be constructed upon the land of Zion, as already given, with its design and function to come through revelation as previously declared. President Larsen concluded the insight he had been given by witnessing that in the Temple in Zion, the Lord would be in the midst of His people, even as He was in the midst of those present at Kirtland, but with a fuller endowment of His Holy Spirit which awaits that day. "Go forth, My Brethren, from this assembly with greater commitment than ever before. Go forth with the testimony that what you are engaged in is of Me, your Lord, and that your labors will bear much fruit. Let My army become very great and let it be sanctified. You have My blessing. Go in peace and share your testimony with your families and your friends."

While worshiping in the Temple, the following Charge was given by Bishop W. Kevin Romer to the members of the Aaronic Priesthood, whose Quorums are by law supervised by the Presiding Bishopric:

"To my Sons of Aaron, we have entered the Holy of Holies. We have entered into the presence of Angels. This is the day spoken of by Enoch in his vision of these last days. (Brother Romer then quoted D&C 36:12c-g, wherein the Lord anciently declared to Enoch about the conditions which would prevail in the world when He returns among us in the last days--when the gathering out of the elect shall occur and righteousness and truth will be caused to sweep the earth as with a flood. The righteous people will be gathered together into a Holy City where also will be the tabernacle of the Lord, and where the people can be preparing and looking forward to the time of His coming, and can gird up their loins.) My Sons of Aaron, Zion cannot be built unless you, the men of the Aaronic priesthood, fulfill and magnify your calling. You have been called from among men and have been given the keys to the ministering of Angels and the preparatory gospel, which is the Gospel of Repentance.

"You are called this day to assist in preparing my people. 'Prepare the Bride, My Church' for the marriage. Behold I desire to come quickly. You are called to teach My people My commandments, that they may repent and become 'Doers' of My word, that their lamps may be trimmed, and they will be sanctified and filled with oil, [which is] My Spirit. It is in this way that My Zion shall be. (Bishop Romer then quoted D&C 58:3a-f, wherein is further described some of the necessary preparations for the laying of the foundation upon which the Zion of God shall stand, and upon which a 'supper of the house of the Lord' may be

prepared and to which all the nations shall be invited. First to participate in this effort shall be the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble, and after that comes the day of His power. Then the marriage of the Lamb shall occur.) You are among the faithful Remnant whom I have called together in this last day as the 'rich and the learned, the wise and the noble.'

"You are called to visit the home of each member of My Church that their homes may be put in order, for the adversary has attempted to destroy the homes of My very elect. Teach them to pray vocally and in secret and to attend to all family duties. Teach them all My commandments. Watch over My Church always and be with and strengthen them, and see that there is no iniquity in the Church, that it may be most holy, abiding the Celestial Law.

"My Sons of Aaron, care for My Zion. Assist My people in fulfilling their stewardships, which I have and will appoint unto them. Teach diligently the Temporal Law, that all may learn to multiply their talents and repress unnecessary wants, that there may be an abundance, for it will be required in order that My storehouse may be filled to overflowing, that all things may be done according to My law. It is through this consecration of My people that the Land of Zion will be sanctified.

"Do this so that the words spoken by the mouths of the Prophets will be fulfilled. ***'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.'*** (Malachi 3:10) The set time for Zion has come, and if you, my Sons of Aaron, will magnify your calling, Zion will continue to unfold within your midst."

President Bowerman also gave a stirring Charge to the Melchisedec priesthood, a portion of which is quoted here. The entire Charge, as well as other commentary and the full Inspired Counsel, were printed in issue No. 21 of *The Hastening Times.*

"Most of you have come from many miles distant, and from many different places, but at this moment in this place, we are one in Jesus Christ our Lord. Still, our specific duties vary. I see Presiding Elders of the congregations and I see Patriarch/Evangelists, the fathers of the Church. Interspersed among you are the standing ministers, those who preach, and teach, and perform the ordinances that sustain us spiritually. And here and there are members of the Standing High Council and the Seventy, frontline missionaries, ready to travel...What an honor, what a privilege to assemble in this place where the sacrifices and dedication of former-day Saints stir the spirit within...

"The hours have passed so swiftly, and now we are coming to the close of this historic assembly. Each man here is searching his own soul, knowing with some certainty what each one brought with him. But now, ere leaving this place, we are contemplating seriously, 'What is it we shall take away from here with us?'

"Does any man now among us doubt his calling? If not, is there a single one of us in this room unwilling to covenant anew with our God to serve Him with all of our might, mind, and strength? My brethren after the Order of Melchisedec, you are now challenged by the Holy One of Israel to listen to His words, which is His voice (D&C 83:9a). The occasion for which we are now gathered anticipates it! The place in which we are now assembled speaks out from history for it! The Holy Spirit requires that we hear this commission ere we leave these hallowed walls:

"There has been a day of calling, but the time has come *[once more and in this place]* ***for a day of choosing; and let those be chosen who are worthy; and...those who are chosen...shall be sanctified; and inasmuch as*** *[you]* ***follow the counsel*** *[of the Lord your Redeemer, you]* ***shall have*** *[be given the]* ***power to accomplish all things*** *[that are required of you]* ***pertaining to [****the freeing of]* ***Zion*** *[from her bondage****].*** (D&C 102:10c-d; [bracketed thoughts added by the speaker])

Let us, brethren, the Elders of His Church, go forward in faith and saintly devotion in order that the work to which we are now called anew may itself go forward with increasing power, that the world may know:

God is marshaling His servants for the rescue of his truth,

He is calling now to duty whether old or in our youth.

If you listen, you can hear it in the thunder of His word.

Let the Elders now be ready for the mission of our Lord.

TRIP SUMMARY

The following excerpt in *The Hastening Times* was taken from the fuller report to the Saints, by the First Presidency, written in the November issue of *News Briefs:*

"The weekend of October 23-24 will linger as another milestone in the unfolding of spiritual momentum toward our long-awaited goals of Zion. A total of 168 men, of all offices in the Aaronic and Melchisedec orders, came from many places,

by bus, automobile and by air, to gather after much study and prayerful preparation in a solemn assembly. The weather was cooperative; the journey, a reminder of those Saints from an earlier day who traveled great distances, largely by foot, through a wilderness to the western frontier. Being thus immersed in the history of our Restoration Foundations in the Kirtland setting was a quiet, but moving, reminder of the sacrifice made by our dedicated predecessors.

"The all-too-brief hours of sojourn at "the Ohio" reached their primary objectives in periods of worship and reflection in the Temple, the House of the Lord. An observable sense of quiet reverence pervaded each of the two gatherings. Lives were consecrated anew, a spirit of hope and promise pervaded the sessions, and the brethren [reluctantly] left those hallowed walls reflecting on the call to each of us in our own day.

"All of the men who were favored by the privilege of being in attendance have undoubtedly already spoken of their individual experience in the family and congregational settings. It now remains to be seen what new insight and empowerment will come to the Remnant cause as we face the many new and unfolding challenges before the Church. Further reports will be appearing in sermons, testimonies, and the printed page, as the lingering impact of the Kirtland Priesthood Assembly-2004 finds its place in the annals of Latter-Day Saint history."

Perhaps the spirit of the ministry, needed but only partially rendered across this land in 2004, can best be summarized by quoting excerpts from an important and illustrious sermon, given during the year. In his 2004 Conference sermon, President Larsen had reminded the assembled conferees: "...Dear Saints, we have put our hands to the plow; there is no looking back now. What is it that we are committed to do? Let's return to the initial scripture reading [Eph. 2:9-10, 13, 17-21], the letter of Paul to the Ephesians. It is sometimes called the 'Queen of the Epistles,' and it has always been a favorite of mine. The first three chapters deal appropriately with unity in Christ. The second three chapters deal with the place of the Church in God's plan to bring about that unity. You see the pattern?

"In this letter Paul talks to the Saints at Ephesus about the place of the Church in bringing about that unity, which is so important! ***'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves;...'*** We should never forget that marvelous gift [of unity]. It is by grace, and nothing we do in our works alone will ever get us there. It is a gift of God; if we rely upon our works we are likely to boast about them. But we also need to remember that faith, and that grace is through faith, and that faith without works is dead: so the two of them become tied [together]. We must understand completely that our salvation is a gift from Him based on faith, but that faith without works is dead, and in this spirit we perform works...

"In his [book] *Commentary,* F. Henry Edwards said: *'...The fact remains that the great reason for the failure of the first attempt to build a literal Zion* [in 1833], *centering in Independence, Missouri, was the unwillingness of the Saints to pay the price* [both monetarily and in the unselfishness of their needed relocation, and other works].' These are sober words for us, because we too must now rise to meet this high standard."

"The Church is not an end in itself; it is only a vehicle to bring us to the Kingdom of God on earth, and my hope is that we climb aboard [eagerly, and not reluctantly] and ride down that path. It was given to my great-great-grandfather to put that vehicle together in these last days. One of the first things that came about was angelic ministry, which ultimately instructed the Saints to gather into Jackson County. Unfortunately, that early attempt [at community] failed. D&C 81:1c, given in April 1832 [the period of this early Jackson County attempt at community] states, ***'...for unto whom much is given much is required;...'*** Much has been given to us; I've heard your prayers and testimonies this week. The Lord has blessed us in many ways. We can't go away from here back to our old ways; we must all be different. In the third paragraph it says, ***'I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say, but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.'*** We are looking for that promise, so that means we must do what He says. It's that simple!...

"In his [book] *Commentary*, F. Henry Edwards said: '...The fact remains that the great reason for the failure of the first attempt to build a literal Zion [in 1833], centering in Independence, Missouri, was the unwillingness of the Saints to pay the price [both monetarily and in the unselfishness of their needed relocation, and other works].' These are sober words for us, because we too must now rise to meet this high standard. Need I say more?" In this challenging but hopeful spirit, the Saints ended the year of 2004.

EVENTS OF YEAR 2005

As the year 2005 dawned upon the Remnant Saints, the media news releases which were heard or viewed gave grim testimony of the dangers to human life, not only from the usual struggles of wars and continuing terrorist acts by disoriented or disaffected individuals or groups, operating ever-more-frequently from the shadows of our burgeoning modern societies, but also from the potential ferocity of the violent forces within nature itself. As the year opened, a severe earthquake had just occurred under the seas of the Indian Ocean off the southwestern coast of Sumatra, and the remainder of the nearby Indonesian Islands. It had produced massive tidal waves (tsunamis) which soon crashed onto several nearby coastlines, even eventually reaching to distant Ceylon and India. The upheaval came during the Christmas holiday, when many tourists were enjoying beaches and coastal guesthouses in these affected countries. The tidal waves produced were enormous, and in many cases swept people, vehicles and structures several miles inland, before they spent all their energy and afterwards left behind unbelievable piles of debris. Thus the levels of resulting destruction, death and misery encountered were truly cataclysmic, perhaps numbering to more than half-a-million souls, reminding all peoples everywhere that we now live in the end-times, a period of just such predicted catastrophes. Furthermore, the scriptural suggestions are that these natural events are now being divinely *allowed to worsen* because of the declining levels of righteousness and compassion being exhibited by the disbelieving populations. Restoration Saints, particularly, continue to feel that the belief in a God of righteous sovereignty is now seriously declining; thus, what we are seeing may be a consequence because He is visibly displeased!

Nor did nature limit herself to this one terrible event in the distant ocean. Before this year of 2005 had ended, a massive earthquake also struck the remote mountain villages of Pakistan, killing and burying untold thousands. Furthermore, by late summer no less than six major hurricanes had struck parts of Florida and the Gulf Coast of the United States, most of these crashing ashore in a period of only about eight weeks, wreaking death and destruction over a wide area and on a colossal scale. Governing authorities, both national and local, seemed overwhelmed, so much so that a great deal of the destruction remained uncleared and unrepaired, even a year later. The city of New Orleans and its surrounding suburbs were nearly destroyed. These areas were 85% flooded by broken levees, resulting in the month-long submergence of residents' houses, some of them up to their roof-lines. The affected cities and states, their citizens necessarily dispersed to temporary homes all over the nation, struggled to cope with the crushing expenses of all this upheaval and the suddenly-necessary repair work. Remnant Saints collected and contributed several thousand dollars to much-needed relief funds and supplies for all these tragedies, as did countless other concerned organizations around the world.

Upon hearing of the special devastation caused by hurricane Katrina, the First Presidency commented in the Summer Issue (No. 24) of *The Hastening Times:* "It was only after preparation of [our original] comments that the full impact of the terrible devastation and human suffering in the Gulf States region began to unfold. We join with people of good will everywhere in prayerful concern for all the victims of this great tragedy. Though most of us will be called upon to face hardships of some kind along the way of life, and for some there will be burdens difficult to bear, the hope of the gospel is in Jesus Christ, our living and eternal Lord and Savior. As we move from the days of summer to the equally demanding days ahead, shall we not rejoice in His grace? Let all the faithful take courage and press forward to the mark of our high calling in Christ Jesus and remember

With insight he [Melvin Zahner] wrote: "...God has and still does send His ministers into the world with the message of His Son, in order to cry repentance to all people. When humans do not respond, then to a certain extent we must all suffer these consequences, as God seeks to get the world's attention.

His promise that when we ***"...take His yoke upon us and learn of Him...we shall find rest unto our souls, for His yoke is easy and His burden is light."*** How much Remnant Saints and their missionary workers wish that the victims of all these tragedies could understand the full implications of these words, and learn how, in these last days, to make an authoritative covenant as the best response to the invitation contained within them!"

Thus it was not surprising that Remnant member Gregory Turner, in a *Belief Briefs* answer to the question of why we, as Restorationists, still believe in the need for a "literal gathering" to a central place of safety and community living, gave answer. He said that it remains a project (and location) designated by our Lord. High Priest Melvin Zahner answered similarly in the next issue's *Belief Briefs* on the question of the possible special significance, if any, of all these sudden disasters occurring in such a short time. With insight he wrote: "...God has and still does send His ministers into the world with the message of His Son, in order to cry repentance to all people. When humans do not respond, then to a certain extent we must all suffer these consequences, as God seeks to get the world's attention. When the Lord's ministers are rejected, we observe that the situation becomes worse...Society fails to understand that we offend God when we refuse to live by God's First Commandment: ***Thou shalt have no other gods before me."*** Brother Zahner knew that in 2005, our materialistic and hedonistic society gave many evidences of having s*everal* other gods, which were seemingly being "worshiped" constantly.

The Lord knew of the forthcoming crises of our day when He first gave these instructions to His Latter-Day ministers. The wisdom of these instructions still stands; the Lord, unlike members of His human creation, does not need to employ an alternate "Plan B."

In his answer to the question on gathering, (soon to be) Bishop Gregory Turner commented: "The destiny of the Restoration is found in the gathering and Zion;...The Saints believe not just in the gospel of salvation, but in the *Gospel of the Kingdom.* The principal of the gathering is *essential* to the new life, spiritual growth, and salvation in the Kingdom of God....The concept of the gathering was present in the beginning...Enoch and his people built a city of Holiness, which will return one day to meet the Kingdom set up upon the earth... The gathering encompasses all of these: **people, land, scriptures and purpose**...God does not change; and neither have His purposes and promises for the gathering and the establishment of [Latter Day] Zion."

These feelings, being written in 2005 by a member of the Presiding Bishopric, were entirely consistent with declarations given some 75 years earlier by then President Frederick M. Smith: "*Shall we teach the gathering to Zion? Yes; emphatically yes! Shall we teach that it is in effect now? Yes. Shall we advise the Saints to gather? Yes. The Lord has told us to gather. And the ministers, to be in harmony with the law and divine instruction to us, must so teach and advise. But it is also necessary for them to teach (and that, too, in harmony with divine instruction) that the gathering shall be had and done in a systematic way."* The thrust of Brother Turner's remaining comments were that the Gathering is still needed; indeed, we are only now seeing the severity of the threats to Zionic living and survival unfolding around us. The Lord knew of the forthcoming crises of our day when He first gave these instructions to His Latter-Day ministers. The wisdom of these instructions still stands; the Lord, unlike members of His human creation, does not need to employ an alternate "Plan B." He just needs to be given the devotion and services of a completely obedient people.

In mid-January, 37 members of the High Priests Quorum held a winter retreat on the grounds of the Franciscan Retreat Center in northern Independence, "to enable an intensive discussion of major issues currently before the Church." All the brethren seemed to sense the unique opportunities, along with several baffling challenges, confronting the Church at this time. The enigma of trying to deal with the growing responses to our missionary overtures from contacts abroad (the latest from Central America, Africa and India), many of them originating on the Internet worldwide electronic communication network, yet at the same time

experiencing difficult and often disappointing responses from the domestic field, including most of our former associates, was a topic of immediate interest. On such topics much valuable dialog ensued. All shared in a rich spirit of appreciative fraternity. The Presidency and the missionary Quorums continued to seek the Lord's guidance for effectively dealing with these challenges.

A Presiding Elders' Workshop followed in late February, to relay and further discuss the conclusions shared by the High Priests. To again acknowledge our human inadequacies as these problems and opportunities were being grappled with, a day of Church-wide fasting and prayer was announced. It was observed on Sunday, March 27.

To enrich the appeal and readability of the current and future issues of *The Hastening Times*, a new more-attractive format was adopted. However, it was realized that our previous five years of free mailings to most of the known Restoration Saints had resulted in only limited response. Mailings were now to be furnished free only to Remnant members, along with our current missionary contacts. However, interested non-members were urged to subscribe for an $8.00 yearly fee.

Work on the new hymnal continued during several meetings held throughout the year, along with much assigned homework and one field-trip to see the intended publisher's facilities at Marceline, MO. This effort was accomplished by the dedicated efforts of the Hymnal Committee, previously assembled in 2004. Using a careful evaluation process and obtaining of necessary copyright permissions, the Committee identified over 600 hymns desired for inclusion. It was composed of chairman Carl VunCannon, Jr., assisted by Kip Carpenter, Conrad Faulk, Dan Gough, Ruth Harold, David Scott, Ernie Shank, Barbara Sherer and Carol Starks. Because of the new hymnal's large size and the great amount of time needed to enter all of it into the computer's musical program—a sacrificial work undertaken alternately by David, Judy and Erica Scott, assisted by Barbara Sherer in Iowa—the hymnal was not finished until the Spring of 2006.

On February 7, President Larsen met with the Council of Women to honor the service of outgoing Chairman Toby Edwards, and to welcome the leadership of Sister Kay Van Fleet. Together they reviewed the origins of organized women's work in the Restoration, and future avenues of ministry and service which could be undertaken currently. Council members Kay Van Fleet, Toby Edwards, Marylyn Gosling, Tina Grippy, Janice Ketchum, Agie McCurry and Sue Petentler also announced that a forthcoming Women's Reception would be given on Saturday during General Conference. In March, as plans for the coming Conference were being finalized, three new priesthood calls were announced by the Presidency: Elder Michael W. Graybill called to the office of Seventy, and High Priests Thomas O. Moats and Philip M. Strecker to serve on the Standing High Council.

Also in March, plans were announced to undertake the operation of a Medical Clinic. In the late summer it was further announced that the clinic would begin operation September 13, 2005 under the direction of Dr. Kenneth Zabel, Internist, with one other medical doctor, two chiropractic doctors including (Shawna Evans, D.C.), several nurses and other health professionals agreeing to assist him, all on a part-time basis. Office hours were announced for the specially-equipped Fireside Room at the Conference Center Building.

The General Conference was held April 1-6, 2005 at the Gathering Place, using the theme, **New Life in Christ**. It was again well attended, with almost half the Church membership registered, and being present for at least one or more of the events. President Larsen delivered an Inspired Document to the Quorums and Orders of the Church, which was discussed and subsequently approved by these groups, and sent on to the general membership where it was finally approved to become D&C R-149. In this revelation, three new Bishops were called, and their ordinations occurred shortly afterwards, along with that of Michael W. Graybill, whose call had been announced earlier. These Bishops were Jerry A. Sherer (Logan, IA); Donald B. Owens (Farmington Hills, MI), and J. Wesley Ault (Floyds Knobs, IN). In this revelation, the Lord also commented further on "the law of health."

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS R-149

As the April 2005 General Conference approached, considerable interest was generated in anticipation of receiving further direction and instruction from the Lord. After receiving overwhelming support from the Quorums and Orders of the Priesthood, an Inspired Document was presented to the Conference on Sunday, April 2. When the vote was called for, the assembly stood as one in testimony of it being the mind and will of God, authorizing it to be added to the canon of latter-day

scripture and published in the Doctrine and Covenants.

The work of bringing forth the kingdom of God was again emphasized as the focal point of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ. New opportunities for missionary outreach were being received in fulfillment of divine promises. The Bishopric was busy with applications of saints seeking to adhere to the Celestial Law of Consecration, and the calling of Bishops was a welcome reassurance from the Lord that He would call more laborers into service as they were needed. The need to implement the counsel found in the Word of Wisdom would become more important than ever, and the Church was admonished to press forward in the cause of Zion.

To the Councils, Quorums, and Orders of the Church and to the General Conference:
In answer to earnest prayer for direction and guidance with regard to the needs and welfare of the Church, the following is given as divine inspiration:

1 In harmony with the inspired message given at the 2004 Kirtland Priesthood Assembly concerning the call of Bishops, it is now given that my servants High Priests Jerry A. Sherer and Donald B. Owens are called to the office of Bishop. My servant John W. Ault is called to the office of High Priest and to the office of Bishop. These brethren bring talents and gifts from their business vocations that qualify them for this work. They must study to magnify their calling and be prepared to assist the work of the Bishopric in implementing the Law of Consecration and other work of a Bishop. These brethren have accepted this calling, and if approved by the General Conference, should be ordained as soon as practicable.

2 The unity of Spirit and understanding in the various Joint Councils in their deliberations and actions is commendable, and therefore, the movement towards my Zion is steadily coming to pass. The execution of the Law of Consecration and adherence to the Celestial Law will continue to bring blessings and good fruit to my cause.

3 a. Anticipation of community building now lies before you, and steps to that end must be taken with care and thoughtful deliberation. The gathering of my people will soon come by direction from the First Presidency, but preparation by the Bishopric for implementation must be in place.

b. Reliance on continued revelatory guidance and the faithful labors of those who have been chosen to lead my people will bring to a more clear understanding the role of community in the unfolding of my Zion.

4 a. It is now time for the next step in further unifying my Saints which will be to designate the land known as Jackson County, Missouri as the "Center Place of Zion." This geographical location will include the three current congregations and allow for a more formal organization to occur, similar to a stake.

b. Planning for this entity will take place during the next year with clearly defined guidelines set forth and reviewed by the Standing High Council with submission to the next General Conference.

The Spirit directs further:

5 It is expedient in me that counsel given previously, known as the Word of Wisdom, should now more than ever be implemented in the lives of my people. The interpretation of various portions of that counsel should be done in light of current health and nutritional guidelines. The work that lies before you will require strong and healthy bodies, and to that end the promises in that counsel are assured.

6 a. My Spirit is moving among many people not only in this land of promise, but elsewhere in the world. The Church must always be prepared to reach out and respond to those who have felt that Spirit.

b. It will be incumbent upon those responsible for the missionary work to be alert and respond to the many challenges that lie ahead as the work goes forth to other cultures. The field is white already to harvest, and the laborers are few, but I will be with you to grant discernment and wisdom as you move forward.

7 These are portentous times and the Adversary is at hand to thwart your efforts in building up my Kingdom in these last days. But if you continue in faith believing and unity of purpose, Satan will be bound up and my work will continue with you, my faithful remnant.

8 The Church is commended for the efforts being made to bring to pass my Kingdom on earth, even Zion, and I will be with you always. Remember, keep oil in your vessels and your lamps trimmed. The bridegroom awaits for the bride to be prepared.

Your Servant,
Frederick N. Larsen
President of the Church
Independence, Missouri,
April 1, 2005

175TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

On April 6, the Conference celebrated the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Restoration Movement with a series of ten dramatic portrayals, five featuring various highlight events from the 24 years of early Restoration Church history, three depicting the subsequent Reorganization period, and the last two the recent re-emergence of the Remnant Church. This was depicted with the twelve signers of the *Proclamation and Invitation to the Faithful*, and a follow-up statement of faith and assurance by Prophet/President F. N. Larsen. These were followed with a media presentation entitled *Little Flock*. This celebration and presentation was witnessed by a very large crowd, nearly filling the Conference Assembly Hall.

In his Conference Class entitled "On the Word of Wisdom," which was also very well attended, President Larsen commented: "I know there is a lot of interest in this subject; I've always had it in the back of my mind with respect to how we would implement the Word of Wisdom. At the Kirtland Assembly, it was clearly made known that the work that lies before us would require men who had stamina, strength, health of body and keenness of mind. I realized many of us were not yet in that state...so with that realization came the message that I perceived from the Lord that was in the document presented at Kirtland...I think it is important for us to delve into that subject...It's interesting how detailed this insight came to young Joseph in regard to the counsel on grain for man and beasts. Note especially the promise given to those who keep and do those things...We should consider modern aspects of nutrition and health guidelines. The most recent food pyramid now puts grains and other things on top, which is in harmony with the Word of Wisdom. More and more of these studies are confirming it; however there is nothing that is black and white with respect to those kinds of things. There are materials coming out to help young people understand good food habits; more of these are needed and will be forthcoming. In the area of supplements and megadoses of vitamins, one nutritionist has written, 'Haphazard self-administration of individual nutrients should not continue to consume resources and threaten health.' The [Utah] Mormons are fairly strict in applying the Word of Wisdom's principles. I ask, 'Are they a more healthy population than the average?' If we all had a 'fat index' to compare as a baseline, would we see improvement in the next several years? That's the key. I'm going to be fairly strict with members of the priesthood on compliance as a matter of stewardship.

Exercise is also an essential component for good health; I would say it's on an equal basis with Section 86. We need to exercise to the point of benefit, by raising our heartbeats to where our bodies can assimilate the oxygen that is required, and prevent or correct the obesity problem now being stressed.

"These guidelines can be considered 'preventive medicine.' Those who are ill should not only practice these guidelines, but also seek professional help from well-trained and reliable physicians. Another aspect I must mention is our obsession with eating–we have got to change that habit! Our fellowship is often through large potlucks or dinners. It's the [size of the] portions that are killing us. We eat out often, and many no longer cook at home, where we can control our ingredients and portions. Exercise is also an essential component for good health; I would say it's on an equal basis with Section 86. We need to exercise to the point of benefit, by raising our heartbeats to where our bodies can assimilate the oxygen that is required, and prevent or correct the obesity problem now being stressed. Let's call it the *Word of Wisdom and the Law of Health;* it is certainly important for the work that lies ahead!

"Let me say one other thing regarding adherence to the Word of Wisdom–will it be a test of fellowship? No. All of us probably disobey, or don't [always] conform, with many of the commandments in the Scriptures, or to all the spiritual laws that are given, and we don't make them a test of fellowship, do we? It's something that we'll come to understand and learn as we grow, and eventually I think we will. That is to be the goal, and I think we need to

do that."

As a result of the extensive preparations made for Conference, some ministers found occasion to draw strength from our recent Remnant Church performance. High Priest Paul Gress, in a February sermon, "Stepping Stones for a Zion-bound People" complimented our continuing unity: "...It is out of this unanimity that we have experienced 'common consent' with the promised blessings of our Lord, by which great accomplishments have been achieved in a very short time. Common consent is a result of shared and understood knowledge, and that is one of the reasons that we now enjoy our business meetings so much. The people have come together informed about the problems facing the Church, and when they vote, after plenty of opportunity for discussion, there have been many occasions where we have seen common consent demonstrated. From our past we know that this [unanimity] is a very unusual thing; I believe there were many people who witnessed that who had never seen it before. I believe this is the way things are going to be in 2005, if we continue to prepare properly."

Other ministers were moved to caution Remnant members about the ever-present problem of remaining "hesitant." Elder Michael Graybill, soon to be ordained a Seventy–and already feeling the frustration encountered in that office by a world too-long hesitant and still disbelieving–gave a January sermon entitled "Overcoming Obstacles to Zion." He admonished his hearers as follows: "...Many times in my life when I have been faced with situations or obstacles that I had difficulty reconciling, or figuring out why or where I was, I would make excuses for myself. Within the Church, we sometimes come up with [similar] reasons to excuse ourselves. Many times the things we say [and offer as excuses] are the very things that bind us down and keep us from moving forward. In former days, God moved in power among His people. Why not [also] in latter days? Scriptures indicate that the reason the body [of our membership] does not experience the manifestation of the gifts and the power of His Spirit upon them is because of sin—because of [lingering] doubt and unbelief. While we've gone forward with tremendous strides in the past year, I feel it is important that we know the Devil is still [operating out] there and seeking to lay snares and stumbling blocks, and to bind us down with that which would distract us and cause us to doubt..

"In Isaiah 40:31 we read, ***'But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.'*** The term 'wait' in this sense means 'to deliver, to travail, to bring forth fruit, to bind together, to look forward to, and prepare for.' A contrast to the interpretation of that word 'to wait' is [used] in Luke 11:55. The Scribes and Pharisees had been following Christ and ***'...laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.'*** In the original Greek for that text, 'wait' means to ambush or [seek to] murder. Many in the past have interpreted what 'waiting on the Lord' means. It does not mean idleness; it does not mean doing nothing. It actually means that we are [seeking to be] faithful, that we [might] bring forth fruit, and look forward to that which is to come."

President Bowerman, partially recovered from cancer surgery, but struggling with some continuing treatments, voiced a thoughtful summary of our challenges in 2005, as he spoke to the Oklahoma Reunion at Wilburton. Apostle Leland Collins had organized this 105-member Reunion, to which Brother Bowerman commented: "...among the things that have recently been whispered to my soul [during my time of recuperation] is the lateness of the hour in which we live. I have long been intrigued by some words written by a man by the name of Cleveland Coxe, who was born around 1820. By the time the Civil War was raging, around his mid-life, he penned some haunting thoughts that just stir my soul...They are in part:

We are living, we are dwelling In a grand and awful time

When each hour some fate is telling: To be living is sublime.

"...Saints, I have spent a lot of long hours over the past few months, listening for the whisper of the Holy Spirit, and I want to convey some things to you that have left an urgent imprint in my soul. The heart of the message that I would bring to you in this Reunion setting is to 'be ready.' Plainly, simply, get ready! Years ago in the Kansas City Stake we had arranged for old Brother Oscar Case, in his 102nd year to preach to us at 'The Highlands,' a beautiful place in a grove of trees. The very first

words he spoke were, *'The Lord told me to tell you to get ready.'* Brothers and sisters, I feel that same message in my heart tonight. There are evil and destructive forces at work right now, forces that are converging on this world, on this nation, in this age. Those forces are being unleashed, marshaled and disciplined by the archenemy of all order, of all justice, of all righteousness. The Devil and his angels are determined to confuse, to disrupt, and to destroy every vestige of goodness, virtue and order.

"I just reread in the past couple of weeks some of the most graphically revealing and prophetic pronouncements ever given concerning these very days, and if you want to pursue them later, they can be found in 3rd and 4th Nephi...Read of the wondrous visitation of the resurrected Christ, followed by the golden years of the [reunited] Nephite civilization...and then the tragic end to all of it because...they began to be lifted up in pride once again. What follows...is a prophetic overview of the Latter Days and the final judgments which are coming upon the land. I didn't say which *may come*–I said which *are coming*...So I have a question for you tonight...how familiar are you with your Scriptures? Are you spending time with them? Do you know what they reveal to us? And especially, have you endeavored to focus on what they predict for our time in history, and of the turmoil and devastation that are intensifying daily in the world, and tragically are now concentrated in [focused upon] this glorious land in which we live? At this point you should ask yourself if you are faithfully teaching the principles of the gospel to your children at home and in our Church Schools. I ask you tonight, are we sufficiently diligent to be watchful and careful to keep out of the Church and from its members those forces which cause disharmony and distrust, which unchecked will bring strife and contention [and whose ultimate goal is destruction of the Church]?... the hour is late, the time to make ready is now, and the very first step is ***'By a Godly walk and conversation.'*** (D&C 17:18c)

There are evil and destructive forces at work right now, forces that are converging on this world, on this nation, in this age. Those forces are being unleashed, marshaled and disciplined by the archenemy of all order, of all justice, of all righteousness. The Devil and his angels are determined to confuse, to disrupt, and to destroy every vestige of goodness, virtue and order.

"We're having a lot of good conversation about the wonderful things that are happening among us as a consequence of the work of the Bishopric, and the developing call to respond in a consecrated way with our surplus, as Saints of the Most High God. It's wonderful; it's thrilling to contemplate; but with this vital program, promising as it is, God does not intend to excuse us from the character-building prerequisites...

"Life today is so exciting. There's so much to do out there, so much to try, so many things to experience...because I've had a lot of time to think and to pray, and to reflect on this. When the Lord said, 'get ready,' He didn't mean that we should take our own sweet time. Several years ago, the Spirit of God took me to the cross, and I've never forgotten it. I have been especially haunted by this experience in recent months. I testify to you: it wasn't a pretty sight. It was terrible because I heard the clamoring of the thoughtless, rancorous crowd, who only a few days before were throwing their cloaks and palm branches in His way. Then only a week later, they [many of them] were yelling for His crucifixion. *The Spirit of the Lord has told me to tell you it does matter whether we spend our time with the 'garbage' on television, or what kind of movies we go to see, if we go to any at all. And it does matter whether we dabble around with porn on the Internet. It does matter what kind of music we listen to, and what kind of books we read. It does matter how we honor or dishonor the Lord's Day. These things are all so vitally important.*

"Is your marriage all of what it ought to be? Are you honoring your vows? Or are you letting the Devil dictate some of your choices—by just slipping in here and there with a little temptation—because you wonder what it would be like 'if'? [As humans we are still trying to recover from Eve's experiment with Satan's temptation.] Parents, are you nurturing your children in the gospel and teaching them the

qualities of righteousness by example? Are you exercising what some like to call 'tough love,' which is really discipline in the precepts of the Lord–precepts that are so vitally important? Are you reflecting gospel standards in your own lives, or are you setting a poor example by compromising just a little, here and there? It was Edgar A. Guest...who said, '*There is an education of the mind that parents early start. But there is learning of a nobler kind and that's the education of the heart. Lessons much more difficult to give; faith, virtue and the way to live.*'

"I'm indebted to my daughter for reminding me to turn on the service from the Washington Mall on Memorial Day. Old Ossie Davis was the Master of Ceremonies for so many years; he is deceased now. His widow...[in his honor] read these lines which, with slight modification, are fitting for all of us tonight, both young and old. *'Today is yours, live it. Love is strong, let's give it. A song can help, let's sing it. Peace is precious, let's bring it. The past is gone, don't relive it. Our work is here, let's do it. Where the world is wrong, let's right it. When the battle is hard, let's fight it. If the road is rough, let's clear it. The future is certain, don't fear it. And if faith is asleep, let's wake it. It is yet today, let's seize the moment [and act upon it, as He has urged!]"*

Other Reunions achieved similar levels of spiritual uplift. Colorado registered 89 and reported a gratifying number of enthusiastic youth; the North Central Reunion at Guthrie Grove, IA had 69 on their "mountaintop" surrounded by the Racoon River. The Northwest Reunion was held amid the mountain beauty at Camp Cascade, ID. Attending for the first time were several members of the recently organized Treasure Valley Branch, who only recently had begun meeting at Eagle, ID.

At the 2005 In Town Reunion held at the Gathering Place, one of the Patriarch/Evangelists (Roger Gault), speaking about the need to achieve "The Repression of Unnecessary Wants," commented as follows: "...We reap what we sow. Our blind, stubborn pride often binds us into making choices that we ought not make. When we act as if there are no consequences for our choices, we will fail to profess the gospel message every time." He summed up similar thoughts very succinctly when he said: "*The very essence of apostasy is that a person puts himself and his own interests first, and God and 'brother' somewhere further down the list of [his or her] priorities."* Saints of all ages would be well served if they memorized that thought for the future!

General Church Youth Leader, High Priest Kenneth Kreglo, reported excellent attendance at the two successive Youth Camps (Junior High and Senior High) held at Blackgum Campgrounds. Campers came from as far away as California, Idaho and Michigan and joined the many from the central states, and all reported a wonderful Spirit of fellowship. Throughout the 2005 Reunion and Camping season, the officers and priesthood members of the Church similarly challenged their brothers and sisters, and shared with all in sermons, campfires, prayers and testimonies, bringing alive the most important and basic truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ–a preparation for Eternal Life on the Celestial level!

"The very essence of apostasy is that a person puts himself and his own interests first, and God and 'brother' somewhere further down the list of [his or her] priorities." Saints of all ages would be well served if they memorized that thought for the future!

A first-of-its-kind missionary effort was organized by Seventy John Dollen, of Laurel, MD and was carried out in late August and September of 2005 under the oversight of Apostle James Rogers. Four young Remnant priesthood members, using tracts and working in teams of two, and having been further trained and spiritually prepared in earlier meetings under the direction of Brother Dollen, began a systematic door-to-door canvas of the religious preferences of the residents around the Laurel area. This is a densely-populated residential suburb of Washington, D.C. During their three-week stay, they used bicycles for their transportation needs when they left their rooms each day at the

Dollen home. These courageous youth were Derek Ashwill, Austin Purvis, Andrew Romer and Aaron Scott.

They attempted to make contact with 2200 households, but found only 550 of these at home and willing to talk on such a religious subject, so that their team could witness effectively. They invited those who showed interest to participate in a discussion and viewing, at selected future times, of the Restoration missionary movie, *Joseph Smith Tells His Own Story*. Twenty-five families accepted the invitation to discuss the Restoration message, and 20 participated in further follow-up discussions and worship services with Brother Dollen, after these young men returned to their jobs and college classes. After they returned home, all four of these brothers testified of the strengthening they experienced, and of the powerful undergirding Spirit they felt, in response to their needs of that moment.

September 16-18 also saw the successful completion of a Women's Retreat at Camp MoKan in Independence. Attending were about 80 enthusiastic women, some coming from distant states, and led at appropriate times by a number of guest ministers. The Retreat experience was especially heart-warming for those distant women, some completely isolated. Also reported in September for the first nine months, the Church Recorder and statistician reported that there had been 29 priesthood ordinations or affiliations of members already ordained, (whose ordinations could be recognized as authoritative).

In late October, 177 priesthood men of every office gathered at the Gathering Place for the third annual Fall Retreat. The sermons, discussions and classes were enjoyed by all. President Larsen presented an Inspired Document, which was reviewed and discussed, along with an earlier Resolution on setting in order the Center Place of Zion. Both were approved for future presentation to the 2006 General Conference body. They are both reprinted below:

INSPIRED DOCUMENT (LATER APPROVED AT SPRING CONFERENCE)

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS R-150

The Priesthood of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints gathered in assembly on October 21-23, 2005 at the Gathering Place, Independence, Missouri. In conjunction with the Priesthood Assembly, President Frederick N. Larsen felt led to seek guidance not only to the priesthood, but to the Church as well. The following document, dated October 20, was presented to the assembly on Saturday, October 22. It received unanimous approval by each quorum and order, together with the recommendation that approval be obtained from the next General Conference. The General Conference on April 7, 2006 received and approved the Inspired Document as the mind and will of God to the Church and authorized its inclusion as R-150 in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Having sought in prayer and fasting for guidance and direction to the Church, the following is given as the expression of the divine will of God to the Quorums, Councils, Orders and membership of the Church.

1 The need for laborers in the missionary field is great, and to that end my servant Ralph W. Damon is now called to be an Apostle in the work of my Church. His abiding faith in the Gospel, personal testimony of my Son, and his passionate concern for the souls of men qualify him for this calling.

2 a. My servants High Priests Gregory A. Turner and Albert V. Burdick, having served faithfully as Counselors to the Presiding Bishop, are now called to the Office of Bishop. They will continue in their role as Counselors in the Presiding Bishopric.

b. Their office and those of the other Bishops constitute the Order of Bishops and are presided over by the Presiding Bishop of the Church.

c. These calls and the counsel following should be presented for approval to the Priesthood assembled October 21-23, 2005 and subsequently to the General Conference of April 2006.

Further direction of the Spirit:

3 a. You my faithful Remnant have not, as yet, fully understood the purpose for which I have called you forth in these last days. You have brought renewal to my Church, but have not fully grasped the vision of the building up of my Kingdom. My coming still awaits the establishment of my Zion.

b. You, above all, my people should be attuned to the signs of the times. Can you not see that political upheaval, economic adversity, decline in morality, and even natural calamities are at your door? Troubled times lie ahead for this, my land of promise.

c. It is yet day, the night will soon come. Be prepared.

4 a. More laborers are needed for the harvest. Therefore, greater efforts than ever before are required for your valiant testimony of the saving grace of my Son to the world around you.

b. Those called specifically to reach out, mine Apostles and Seventy, must move out in great faith, spreading the Word to all who will hear, preparing them for the day when they will come to Zion.

5 a. Jackson County, Missouri and the regions round about have always been and are still the designated place for Zion, even the New Jerusalem. It is the designated area for The Gathering of my people.

b. According to law already given, adherence to the Law of Consecration is required alike of all those who gather. The Bishopric are commended for their implementation of the consecration of my people thus far and should continue pressing for compliance by all those who will participate.

c. Many in times past have come to the "Center Place" as a commitment to "gather" and as such should be considered so. They occupy a place in Zion. However, since "laying all things before the Bishop" is a requirement of the gathering and consecration, compliance with that law is required.

6 a. As an ensign to the world and a demonstration that man can live together in peace and harmony with his neighbor, exercising stewardships, utilizing inheritances, and not being unduly influenced by Babylon, it is necessary to provide for close community living. To that end, as it has been revealed previously at the Kirtland Assembly of 2004, preparation for a community of my people should be developed utilizing land in Eastern Jackson County.

b. Let harmony and good will prevail, not only among those who are called to community planning, but among all the Church members alike as the foundation of that Zionic endeavor, so long hoped for, unfolds.

c. Of necessity, it may be that some will remain in their neighborhoods outside of the community, where they will be required to "leaven" those places they occupy within Zion.

7 As community planning unfolds, attention to development of The Gathering Place should not be abrogated, for there on that sacred ground I have met you many times in worship and conference and will continue to do so. Further development of those grounds should continue to meet the ongoing needs of my people.

8 a. I wait to endow you with greater understanding and power, my Remnant flock, but too many of you are enmeshed in the things of this world. You must find your way out of Babylon. Greater sacrifice and discipline than you have known before will be required for the work that truly lies ahead.

b. I, the Lord, your Savior, await the coming forth of my Zion as a blossoming flower, beckoning for all to come and see the Kingdom of God on Earth.

c. Arm yourselves with great faith, knowledge, humility and love and all will be well.
Thus saith the Spirit.
Humbly submitted by your servant in Christ,
FREDERICK N. LARSEN
PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH
INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI, OCTOBER 20, 2005

RESOLUTION – THE CENTER PLACE OF ZION

The following Resolution, printed here in its final slightly-amended form, was presented for prayerful reflection in the Fall of 2005:

RESOLUTION – THE CENTER PLACE OF ZION

Both spiritually and historically, "the cause of Zion" is an intrinsic belief in relation to the literal establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. It has been a primary tenet of faith for Latter Day Saints since the early 19th century inception of the restored gospel, undergirded and sustained by such foundational scriptural citations as:

Inspired Version, Genesis 7:23,24; 9:21; Matthew 6:10-15; Revelation 21:2

Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 3:187; 3 Nephi 7:43; Ether 6:3-5

D&C, 6:3a; 83:1b; 98:4g; 140:5a; R-145:7

With the emergence of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and its claim to both lineal prophetic leadership, and doctrinal continuity, the reaffirmation of foundational articles and covenant are once again central to its message. From that foundation, and in response to current revelation [D&C R-149:4a,b], the First Presidency hereby submits to the Councils, Quorums, Orders, and General Conference the following guidelines for the formal re-affirmation and implementation of the Center Place of Zion.

WHEREAS, the State of Missouri, county of Jackson, and the city of Independence, have been prophetically, and by numerous actions of preceding General Conferences, declared to be the place for Zion, the New Jerusalem; and,

WHEREAS, Divine direction [D&C R-147] has restated, and by inference re-emphasized, the call to renew with all diligence the gathering to, and building up of, the above as the Center Place of Zion, the New Jerusalem, and the place for the assembling of a faithful, covenant people; and,

WHEREAS, in order to be obedient to the commandments and fulfill the commission now resting upon the Saints; be it hereby,

RESOLVED, that Jackson County, encompassing the city of Independence, is again acknowledged as the specific area designated for renewing the process of gathering. Such designation shall not, however, be interpreted to exclude surrounding counties as circumstances and growth may warrant; and be it further,

RESOLVED, the city known as Independence, Missouri is hereby reaffirmed as the place for "the Temple" and the headquarters of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and as such shall be "the seat of the Presidency" and the principle place of business of said Church; and be it further,

RESOLVED, the Center Place of Zion shall be presided over , directly or indirectly, by the First Presidency, with the advice and consent of the Standing High Council, and such Assistants as may be required, to coordinate and oversee all appropriate programs and organized activities. Temporal affairs shall be under the immediate oversight of the Presiding Bishopric and such Agents and Assistants as circumstances, stewardship associations, and physical needs, etc. may require; and be it further,

RESOLVED, the Center Place of Zion shall, for the most effective spiritual needs of the Saints, be organized into congregations. These congregations shall be bodies of members of varying sizes and locations who, by guidance and choice, will constitute groupings of the membership in appropriate geographic locations for both worship and fellowship, and as focal points of witness to the community[s] where they are situated; and be it further,

RESOLVED, the Center Place, while guided administratively by the General Authorities specified herein, shall be represented legislatively by a Conference which shall be open to all resident baptized members in good standing. This Center Place shall have jurisdiction over all legislative matters within its purview, such as, but not limited to, the following:

(a) Consideration and approval of all calls to the priesthood not requiring General Conference action.

(b) Approval [or disapproval] of all ministerial appointments to serve as Assistants to the First Presidency, or Presiding Bishopric, including congregational presiding elders, and various other administrative priesthood designations. [e.g., area coordination, specific ministerial functions and duties, bishop's agents, etc.] Congregations will continue to conduct coordinated business meetings for the selection of local departmental leaders, for annual budgeting, building plans where appropriate, etc.

(c) Authorization for acquisition and improvement of properties specifically related to Center Place growth and development. Where such development relates to General Church oversight, they shall also require further legislative approval.

(d) Submission of an annual Composite Budget based on Center Place-wide programs and development. This will include combined congregational budgets, and other organizations when appropriate, [stewandship associations, agricultural and industrial associations, etc.] thus holding appropriate leaders and associates accountable to legislative review and approval.

(e) Currently, the designation of certain General Church departmental and other necessary leaders may be extended into the Center Place, when so appointed and approved. While the gathering and membership growth may in time alleviate the need for some to serve dual positions, until such a condition is achieved additional responsibility will always be a present need; and be it finally,

RESOLVED, formal action upon organization of the Center Place of Zion is hereby approved in response to the call to both gather and prepare a people who will be consecrated to the highest principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In

responding, both officers and members will be called upon to institute and fulfill the laws of the Celestial Kingdom. Where existent revelations and official policy are clear, forward movement may be undertaken immediately. As the initiation of further policies and programs not so familiar to the present generation takes place, the Saints must accept the responsibilities to learn their duties, seek Divine guidance, and move forward in faith, relying upon Him in whose cause we labor.

The First Presidency
August 11, 2005

This resolution was not approved until the Conference of April 2006, at which time it was amended to this form.

CONCLUSION OF 2005

December saw the publication of Theme Helps for 2006, the ordinations of Dennis Evans and Glenn Vreeland to the office of High Priest, Michael Myers to Seventy, and James L. Ross to Patriarch/Evangelist. These ordinations occurred during a joint, three-congregation service at the Gathering Place. In addition, special assignment areas were announced: for Dennis Evans to be Presiding Elder (in 2006) at Blue Springs Congregation, and Glenn Vreeland to become a liaison for the northwestern Branches at Delta, Colorado, and at Magic Valley and Treasure Valley Branches in Idaho. Other liaison ministries had already been announced earlier: Sam Dyer, Jr. to Branches in Ava, Missouri and Rogers, Arkansas; and Thomas Moats to Branches at Sperry, Muskogee and Texoma in Oklahoma, and Marlin Branch in Texas.

To conclude the year 2005, geographical assignments were also announced, covering many unorganized territories of particular interest, affecting both of the two missionary Quorums: the current seven Apostles and the current nine Seventies.

With these exciting happenings, the eventful year of 2005 came to a close. The Remnant Saints were marching ever onward toward the Zion of their hopes and dreams! ■